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ABSTRACT

A study determined the perceptions of Indiana public school superintendents regarding their role in influencing the development of a community of readers in Indiana middle-grades schools. In 1993-94, subjects, 292 out of a total of 297 public school superintendents, completed surveys related to 10 selected reading issues, including students' access to trade books; teachers as role models; staff development; daily time for students to become proficient readers; special assistance for students reading below grade level; providing school libraries that attract students and teachers; encouraging parents to support reading; and providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported. These issues, as related to the school corporation size, tenure as a superintendent, and the number of college reading courses completed by the superintendents, were analyzed. Results indicated that: (1) neither the size of school corporations nor the superintendents' experience level had a significant impact on superintendents' perceptions of middle-grades reading, but the number of college reading courses did make a significant difference; (2) superintendents assumed that providing school libraries that attract students and teachers was the most vital factor related to middle-grades reading, however, they did not directly connect library book collections with good school libraries; and (3) superintendents perceived that reading is important and reported that reading practices employed in their schools and their direct involvement on the 10 issues deserved at least some priority. (Contains approximately 225 references and 44 tables of data. Appendixes present a list of the Middle Grades Reading Network, letters to superintendents, the survey instrument, and data.) (RS)

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# THE SUPERINTENDENT'S ROLE IN DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY OF READERS IN INDIANA MIDDLE-GRADES SCHOOLS

by

Earlene L. Holland, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Maconaquah School Corporation

August 1994

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The dissertation of Earlene L. Holland, Contribution to the School of Graduate Studies, Indiana State University, Series III, Number 625, under the title The Superintendent's Role in Developing a Community of Readers in Indiana Middle-Grades Schools is approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of Indiana public school superintendents regarding their role in influencing the development of a community of readers in Indiana middle-grades schools.

The population of the study constituted 292 out of a total of 297 public school superintendents who were employed during the 1993-94 school year. The research question related to ten selected reading issues that were: 1. student access to current and useful trade books; 2. teachers as role models; 3. appropriate professional development for staff; 4. daily time for students to become proficient readers; 5. daily time for students to become voluntary readers; 6. special assistance for students reading below grade level; 7. providing school libraries that attract students and teachers; 8. providing a close and useful relationship with the public library; 9. encouraging parents to support reading; and 10. providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported.

These issues (as related to the categories of the superintendents' perceptions of the importance, school corporation practices, and the superintendents' role regarding the selected reading issues and the size of Indiana school corporations, superintendents' experience, and the number of college reading courses completed) were analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance with

significance established at the .05 level.

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are warranted:

1. Neither the size of school corporations nor the superintendents' experience level had a significant impact on superintendents' perceptions of middle-grades reading, but the number of college reading courses did make a significant difference.

2. Superintendents commonly held the assumption that providing school libraries that attract students and teachers was the most vital factor related to middle-grades reading. However, they did not directly connect library book collections with good school libraries or providing daily time for students to voluntarily read.

3. In totality, superintendents perceived that reading in Indiana's middle-grades schools is important to them. Further, superintendents do report that the reading practices employed in their schools and their direct involvement regarding these practices on the ten selected issues do deserve at least some priority.

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A special note of thanks must first and foremost be given to the positive, collaborative efforts of my doctoral committee chairman, Dr. Robert L. Boyd, and Committee Members Dr. Dale G. Findley, Dr. Rebecca W. Libler, and Dr. Alex C. Moody. In the same spirit, but with undying gratitude and praise, I cannot hope to ever repay the dedication, incredible patience, and understanding that my dissertation chairman, Dr. Loran Braught, has provided throughout this entire dissertation process. The noteworthy comments and suggestions of Dr. Braught and the entire committee have indeed significantly broadened and enriched my thinking in a manner that will help me better serve others in the future.

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The patience and understanding of my husband, Randy, and daughters Randa, Lisa, and Wanda should also be acknowledged. Their unending confidence in my abilities has helped sustain my efforts.

Every man's work is a portrait of himself. A very special tribute must be awarded to an educator who, over a span of more than forty-five years, has interspersed

exquisite portraits of himself throughout Indiana and beyond. He has stimulated, inspired, and encouraged many young people to take the risks needed to go forward and continually grow to serve others in the field of reading and education. This was done not just with words, but by his own professional example of immersing himself in any endeavor he undertook. His charismatic enthusiasm and creative energy abound like a soaring eagle. I have been just one of the products of his hard work and dedicated efforts. Through a period of over twenty years, he has persistently pushed me gently, but wisely, through several upward career moves, each of which gave me additional opportunities to make a difference in the educational lives of children and communities. Because he strongly believes that each person should continue to strive to learn and grow, and that age should be no barrier, he completely wore me down with philosophical and pragmatic reasoning until I finally decided to pursue the doctoral program and ultimately this dissertation. He has the constant knack of making it all seem so easy. His support and encouragement have been unwavering. The credit for any successes many of us would claim, and this tribute, rightfully belongs to Dr. Jack W. Humphrey who has dedicated himself to prepare us to go forth and help children learn to help themselves by learning to read, enjoy reading, and thereby, become good productive citizens. He has become a legend in his own time.

It is especially because of the efforts of professional educators like Dr. Boyd, Dr. Braught, Dr. Findley, Dr. Humphrey, Dr. Libler, and Dr. Moody, who take the extra time to build us up when we are down, smooth our paths when they are rough, and share their enthusiasm and energy, that we can go forth to become soaring eagles who will someday, too, perhaps become "exquisite portraits."

And lastly, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Ruth Y. Schiller, a retired educator who, since my birth, has always been an "exquisite portrait" for me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES . . . . . x

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION . . . . . 1

Statement of the Problem . . . . . 5

Significance of the Study . . . . . 8

Sources of Data . . . . . 10

Delimitations . . . . . 10

Limitations . . . . . 11

Assumptions . . . . . 11

Definition of Terms . . . . . 11

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH . . . 17

Introduction . . . . . 18

The Superintendent's Role . . . . . 20

Barriers to Reading Reform. . . . . 31

Access to Current and Useful Trade Books. . . 35

Adults and Teachers as Good Reading Role Models . . . . . 41

Professional Development. . . . . 44

Time For Students To Become Proficient Readers . . . . . 48

Time For Students To Become Voluntary Readers . . . . . 56

Below Grade-Level Students Are Provided With Special Assistance . . . . . 62

The Library-Media Center Attracts Students and Teachers . . . . . 68

Relationship With The Public Library . . . . 71

Encourage Parents To Support Reading . . . . 74

Chapter Page

Supportive Reading Environment . . . . . 78

Summary . . . . . 82

3. PROCEDURES . . . . . 85

Selection of Population . . . . . 85

Development of the Survey Instrument . . . . 86

Data Collection Procedure . . . . . 86

Data Analysis . . . . . 87

Calculations of Data for Issues . . . . . 89

Calculations of Data for Categories . . . . . 91

Designated Level of Significance . . . . . 92

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS. . . . . 94

The Null Hypothesis . . . . . 95

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . 141

Introduction . . . . . 141

Summary . . . . . 141

Conclusions . . . . . 146

Discussions . . . . . 147

Recommendations . . . . . 150

BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . 153

APPENDIXES . . . . . 171

A. Middle Grades Reading Network . . . . . 171

B. Survey Validation Letter . . . . . 172

C. Indiana Superintendent's Letter . . . . . 174

D. Indiana Superintendent's Follow-up Letter . . . 176

E. Indiana Superintendent's Survey of Middle-Grades Reading Priorities . . . . . 177

F. One-way Analysis of Variance of Survey Items . 182

# LIST OF TABLES


| Table | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| 4.1 | Survey Instruments Mailed and Returned . . . | 94 |
| 4.2 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of the Importance of Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading . . . . . | 97 |
| 4.3 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of the Practices of the School Corporation Regarding Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading . . . . . | 98 |
| 4.4 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of the Superintendent's Role Regarding Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading . . . | 99 |
| 4.5 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Student Access to Current and Useful Trade Books . . | 100 |
| 4.6 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Teachers as Role Models . . . . . | 101 |
| 4.7 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Appropriate Professional Development for Staff . . . . . | 102 |
| 4.8 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Daily Time for Students to Become Proficient Readers . . . . . | 103 |

| Table | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| 4.9 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Daily Time for Students to Become Voluntary Readers . . . . . | 104 |
| 4.10 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Special Assistance for Students Reading Below Grade Level . . . . . | 105 |
| 4.11 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Providing School Libraries that Attract Students and Teachers . . . . . | 106 |
| 4.12 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Providing a Close and Useful Relationship with the Public Library . . . . . | 107 |
| 4.13 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Encouraging Parents to Support Reading . . | 108 |
| 4.14 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Providing an Environment Where Reading is Encouraged and Supported . . . . . | 109 |
| 4.15 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of the Importance of Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading . . . . . | 110 |
| 4.16 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of the Practices of the School Corporation Regarding Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading . . . . . | 111 |

| Table | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| 4.17 | One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of the Superintendent's Role Regarding Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading . . | 112 |
| 4.18 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Student Access to Current and Useful Trade Books . . . . . | 113 |
| 4.19 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Teachers as Role Models . . . . . | 114 |
| 4.20 | One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Appropriate Professional Development for Staff . . . . . | 115 |
| 4.21 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Daily Time for Students to Become Proficient Readers . . . . . | 116 |
| 4.22 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Daily Time for Students to Become Voluntary Readers . . . . . | 117 |
| 4.23 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Special Assistance for Students Reading Below Grade Level . . . . . | 118 |

| Table | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| 4.24 | One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Providing School Libraries that Attract Students and Teachers . . . . . | 119 |
| 4.25 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Providing a Close and Useful Relationship with the Public Library . . . . . | 120 |
| 4.26 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Encouraging Parents to Support Reading . . | 121 |
| 4.27 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Providing an Environment Where Reading is Encouraged and Supported . . . . . | 122 |
| 4.28 | One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of the Importance of Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading . . . . . | 123 |
| 4.29 | One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of the Practices of the School Corporation Regarding Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading . . . . . | 124 |
| 4.30 | One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of the Superintendent's Role Regarding Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading . . | 125 |

| Table | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| 4.31 | One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Students' Access to Current and Useful Trade Books . . . . . | 126 |
| 4.32 | One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Teachers as Role Models . . . . . | 127 |
| 4.33 | One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Appropriate Professional Development for Staff . . . . . | 128 |
| 4.34 | One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Daily Time for Students to Become Proficient Readers . . . . . | 129 |
| 4.35 | One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Daily Time for Students to Become Voluntary Readers . . . . . | 130 |
| 4.36 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Special Assistance for Students Reading Below Grade Level . . . . . | 131 |
| 4.37 | One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Providing School Libraries that Attract Students and Teachers . . . . . | 132 |

| Table | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| 4.38 | One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Providing a Close and Useful Relationship with the Public Library . . . . . | 133 |
| 4.39 | One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Encouraging Parents to Support Reading . . | 134 |
| 4.40 | One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Providing an Environment Where Reading is Encouraged and Supported . . . . . | 135 |
| 4.41 | F-Value and Means Summary of the Size of Indiana School Corporations, Tenure (Experience) as a Superintendent, and Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Indiana Superintendents as Compared to Ten Selected Reading Issues in Middle-Grades Schools and the Superintendent's Perception of the Importance of the Issues, the Superintendent's School Corporation Practices Aimed at the Issues, and the Superintendent's Perception of His/Her Specific Role Regarding the Selected Issues . . . . . | 136 |
| 4.42 | Calculated Mean Summary of Individual Survey Items Regarding the Superintendents' Perception of the Importance of Each Survey Item, the Practices of the School Corporation, and the Superintendents' Role with Regard to Each of the Ten Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading . . | 138 |
| 4.43 | Summary of Individual Survey Items Regarding the Superintendents' Perception of the Importance of Each Survey Item, the Practices of the School Corporation, and the Superintendents' Role with Regard to Each of the Ten Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading . . . . . | 139 |
| 4.44 | Rank of Superintendents' Perceptions Regarding Middle-Grades Reading Issues . . | 140 |

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

Only 78 percent of Indiana students graduate from high school (Office of the Governor, 1991). Knowing that the successful transition into adulthood depends on educational success that is directly linked to reading achievement, it is surprising to learn how little care is given to the reading opportunities and instruction that we provide ten- to fifteen-year-olds in Indiana. The report, "A Study of Reading in Indiana Middle, Junior, and Senior High Schools," documents that there is a weak link in the educational conduit from elementary to secondary reading programs: Today's middle-grades students have less time allotted to reading in the school curriculum than their counterparts of fifty years ago; one-quarter of Indiana schools provide no special assistance for middle-grades students who have fallen behind due to reading failure; over one-third of students who have fallen behind one or more grade levels receive no special help; Indiana ranks thirty-second nationwide in textbook expenditures; Indiana schools spend, on the average, $1.92 per student per year on supplementary classroom reading materials — less than the cost of one paperback book; many teachers receive no planned staff

development in reading; few schools make efforts to connect with parents and community agencies, such as public libraries, to extend young people's reading opportunities beyond the school day; and, Indiana students rank forty-second (after adjustments) out of fifty states and Washington, D.C. on SAT scores (Humphrey, 1992, March, No. 4).

These facts indicate that, for many adolescents, Indiana schools are not providing the critical elements for reading success which in summary are: 1. a vision for lifelong readership; 2. adequate access to books — whether for classroom assignments or voluntary reading; 3. providing access to excellent practice — the very best reading instruction taught by teachers with confidence and zeal for reading; and, 4. meaningful opportunities to read and to interact with passionate readers out of school as well as in school (Humphrey, 1992, No. 4).

> Reading is the most important, fundamental ability taught in the nation's schools. It is vital to society and to the people within it. It is the door to knowledge and a capability that can liberate people both intellectually and personally. (National Assessment Governing Board, 1992, p. 1)

In order to create this continuum of meaningful reading experiences for our middle-grades students, a genuine commitment must be made and followed by careful, on-going planning and implementation. The key educational player roles in this total process are variously identified as librarians, teachers, reading specialists, and principals. However, perhaps the most important and influential

professional person seldom mentioned is the superintendent (Williams, 1992). If the superintendent is committed to students and reading, s/he can become a vital link that can ensure creative literacy happenings and bring about a community of readers within the school community.

Jeanne Chall, a renowned Harvard professor and researcher in the study of children's reading and reading habits, noted in a 1988 discussion that the future of our nation depends on our children being able to read and understand what they read. In the course of that discussion, Chall concluded that adolescents of today simply do not read enough to enjoy reading, which in turn affects their ability to read. One example of how motivating pleasure reading affects reading ability happened in Indianapolis, Indiana, when a caseworker for the Big Brothers of Greater Indianapolis urged thirty-four Big Brothers to engage their Little Brothers in reading with them on a regular basis. The caseworker reported that the Big Brothers ". . . have seen a lot of improvement in the Little Brothers' ability to read" (Atteberry, 1992, p. 16).

Reading for pleasure is becoming an endangered practice. At approximately age twelve, children's interest in reading has reached a peak and many adolescents tend to completely quit reading for pleasure (Simic, 1991). In 1965 the average American read for thirty minutes a day and the average fifth grader read for at least 5.75 minutes a day. Today the average adult reads only twenty-four minutes a

day, and the average fifth grader reads 4.6 minutes a day (outside of school). Since 1965 pleasure reading has decreased at least 25 percent in both children and adults (Silka, 1992). The typical eighth grader spends only 14.5 minutes a day reading as compared to 183 minutes a day watching television (National Center for Education Statistics, 1990).

A 1993 telephone survey for the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, the American Federation of Teachers, and the Chrysler Corporation, documents the continuing concern over the decline in reading as a pastime. The national survey, based on interviews with fifty teachers and 524 students, revealed that 86 percent of nine year-olds read weekly but only 42 percent of seventeen year-olds read weekly. The older students preferred social activities over reading. Only 14 percent of the seventeen year-olds preferred reading. In comparison to mathematics and computers, 34 percent of students and 58 percent of parents regarded reading as most important. Only a year earlier, a total of 44 percent of parents and students felt reading was of most importance. Television still played an important factor. Sixty-three percent of those who watched one hour or less of television felt they were active readers while 54 percent of those who watched television five hours or more read infrequently. There is definitely a dramatic decline in reading activity in children between the ages of nine and seventeen. The study, in summary, reveals that:

> the pre-teen and teen years are the ones of intense interest in social interaction, which puts more solitary activities, such as reading, at a severe *disadvantage* for capturing young people's attention and involvement. . . . Young Americans are consumed with the importance of mathematics and computers, to the detriment of reading and writing. . . . Reading books and reading to other people steadily decline as activities among children between nine and seventeen, and these activities are only partially replaced by attention to newspapers and magazines. . . . The single biggest factor affecting young people's reading habits is the extent of parental involvement in their children's reading. . . . Not only does young people's frequency of reading decline during the years from age nine to seventeen but so does their interest in reading. (Peter D. Hart Research Associates, 1993, pp. 2-10)

Educators realize that the "more the student reads for pleasure the more proficient s/he will become" (Atteberry, 1992, p. 5), which clearly indicates that a lack of motivation to read, as concluded by Chall and others, hinders progress in school that is dependent on students' abilities to read and comprehend what they read. This lack of progress, in turn, affects study habits, study skills, and the ability to do school work successfully. The loss of ability in these critical areas logically effects a higher school dropout rate. The skilled human resources needed to keep Indiana functioning with other states in a competitive, global economy cannot be provided by high school dropouts.

## Statement of the Problem

The primary focus of this study was to determine the perceptions of Indiana public school superintendents regarding their role in influencing the development of a community of readers in Indiana middle-grades schools.

This concept, building a community of readers, at a cost in excess of seven million dollars, was developed over a six-year period as a part of the Lilly Endowment's middle-grades study initiative. It involved a large number of young adolescent and reading experts including members of an advisory board (See Appendix A).

> A community of readers provides young adolescents with: reading role models, active engagement with books and other reading materials, educators and youth-serving professionals who have had professional development about youth literacy, effective reading instruction, activities to meet the needs of poorer readers, reading supported throughout the school environment, reading opportunities in the after-school hours and during the summer, parents who attend to their young adolescents' reading needs, and schools, families, youth agencies, and public libraries that work together closely. (The Middle Grades Reading Network, 1993, p. 7)

Using this description of building a community of readers, the investigation sought the answer to the following research question:

> Is there a difference due to: (A) School corporation size; (B) Tenure (experience) as a superintendent; or (C) Number of college reading courses completed by superintendents that affect Indiana Public School Superintendents' perceptions of the category of importance of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, the category of school corporations' practices concerned with the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, or the category of the superintendents' perception of their role regarding the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, nor upon the Indiana

superintendents' perceptions of each of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading which are: 1. student access to current and useful trade books; 2. teachers as role models; 3. appropriate professional development for staff; 4. daily time for students to become proficient readers; 5. daily time for students to become voluntary readers; 6. special assistance for students reading below grade level; 7. providing school libraries that attract students and teachers; 8. providing a close and useful relationship with the public library; 9. encouraging parents to support reading; and 10. providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported?

The research question was answered by the formulation of the null hypothesis:

There is no significant difference due to: (A) School corporation size; (B) Tenure (experience) as a superintendent; or (C) Number of college reading courses completed by superintendents that affect Indiana Public School Superintendents' perceptions of the category of importance of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, the category of school corporations' practices concerned with the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, or the category of the superintendents' perception of their role regarding the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, nor upon the Indiana

superintendents' perception of each of the ten specific issues related to middle grades reading which are: 1. student access to current and useful trade books; 2. teachers as role models; 3. appropriate professional development for staff; 4. daily time for students to become proficient readers; 5. daily time for students to become voluntary readers; 6. special assistance for students reading below grade level; 7. providing school libraries that attract students and teachers; 8. providing a close and useful relationship with the public library; 9. encouraging parents to support reading; and 10. providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported.

## Significance of the Study

There is a growing body of evidence that Indiana schools are providing less attention to their middle-grades schools' reading programs. This is evidenced by unacceptable test scores, inadequate library book collections, less time in the curriculum, lower participation in staff development activities, and fewer funds being earmarked for reading materials (Humphrey, 1992, March, No. 4).

A new concept, Building a Community of Readers, has been promoted and funded at approximately seven million dollars over a seven-year period by Lilly Endowment, Inc. It seeks to improve reading programs in fifty-three school corporations and in 140 middle-grades schools. But Indiana

has almost 300 school corporations, approximately 2,000 schools, and 458 schools housing middle-grades students (Indiana Department of Education, Educational Information Systems Division, 1994). Much needs to be done if Indiana students are to be successful; individual school corporations will have to provide their own leadership, given that the Lilly Endowment cannot provide the funding to work with all Indiana schools.

Local community efforts must not only be focused on financial needs but on those efforts that provide encouragement, support, and direction toward addressing the reading needs of young adolescents. The school district superintendent is the central, key figure and role model for education in the local community and has the influence to cause change in a way that can ensure the development of a community of readers.

Dr. Tracy Dust, the Executive Director of the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents, in his first address to district superintendents, proclaimed that one of the goals of Indiana school superintendents and the Superintendents' Association must be to foster and promote reading in our local school communities because ". . . our children can't succeed if they can't read."

Therefore, it is significant that we explore the role of the superintendent in developing a community of readers, particularly at the middle-grades school level since that is a crucial time in a child's life when lifelong reading

habits are developed (Atteberry, 1992, p. 5; Williams, 1992).

This study was designed to ask superintendents to ascertain how they regard the importance of each of the ten issues described in the null hypothesis, to find out what they believe are reasonable practices to employ, and to look at how they perceive their role as their school district builds a community of readers in the middle-grades schools of Indiana.

## Sources of Data

A survey relative to the research questions was mailed to all Indiana superintendents who were employed by district school boards for the 1993-94 school year.

The current Indiana Public School districts were identified by the records of the Indiana Department of Education. The Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents maintains current data on superintendent positions. These data were used to select superintendents who received surveys.

## Delimitations

1. The study was restricted to educators employed as licensed public school superintendents in Indiana during the 1993-94 school year.
2. The entire focus of the study was based on a community of readers as defined by the Lilly Endowment middle-grades reading network advisory

board.

## Limitations

1. Questions in the survey were not tested for validity and reliability.
2. The arbitrary development of questions was intended to adequately sample more extensive superintendent activities and perceptions. Other questions could have produced different kinds of or more data.
3. The categories in terms of size of school corporations was arbitrarily set at: small - up to 1,000 students; medium - 1,001 to 8,000 students; large - more than 8,000 students.

## Assumptions

This study was based on the assumptions that:

1. Each respondent would give true and accurate data.
2. The survey was complete in that it asked the questions required to provide necessary information.

## Definition of Terms

In an attempt to clarify terminology, the following terms were identified:

Access to Materials: Availability of supplementary reading materials in classrooms, school libraries, public libraries, youth-service agencies, and homes.

Book Acquisition Rate: Number of books per student per year

purchased by the school.

College Courses: Courses specifically related to the teaching of reading (not including English courses) and set at categories of 0-1, 2-4, and 5 or more college courses.

Community of Readers: A community that supports all young adolescents to develop to their full potential as readers. In a middle-grades school that has organized itself as a community of readers, the library is the hub of school activity. At any time of the day, as well as before and after school and during lunch, you will find students browsing for books or magazines, voluntarily reading for pleasure, working on assignments, or perhaps huddled in a corner reviewing a video or a new CD. Poor readers and avid readers mingle; library use is a right, not a privilege based upon good habits or high grades. Bus schedules have been arranged so that all students will have access to the library regardless of how they come to school. Perceptive and enthusiastic library staff know what young people want to read and how to encourage them to do so. They present new books to classes, individually counsel students on reading selections, and display materials in ways that catch young people's interest. They are also in close touch with classroom teachers, assisting them to get the materials they need for their curricula. The library is well-stocked with materials of the kind that young adolescents want and need — materials that are up-to-date, appealing, and attractive.

In such a school, it would not be unusual to see paperbacks or magazines hanging out of a young person's back pocket, handbag, or locker. Nor would it be unusual to chance upon pairs or groups of students in the hallways involved in a spontaneous discussion about a book they have just read. Passing adults join in the discussion, familiar with the books teens read and enjoy. From the principal to the custodian, no one in the school is immune to an interest in books and reading.

The reading activity is not only in the hallway. Every student, every day, has time in class to read books of his or her choice and so does the teacher. In a true community of readers, sustained silent reading is not a study hall, nor do students with poor reading skills simply turn pages in mute despair. Instead, teachers, who themselves are readers, ensure that students know how to select books and encourage responses to reading through individual conferences,

student journals, and other appropriate measures.

Reading is a tool for inquiry in every subject area in the school. For instance, when students study about the medieval period, they comb the library for books and resources on the topic. Library materials complement and extend classroom collections. From this reading they develop topics of interest to study in greater depth. The individual or small group reports on castles, heraldry, guilds, or other topics about this period all require further reading, writing, and rereading. In science, students write and read as they conduct experiments, seek new information on topics of study, and develop reports on their findings.

Messages about the enjoyment and usefulness of reading are embedded throughout the school environment and are amplified by special events that enliven the routine. These might include visits by local writers, regular trips to the public library, field trips that incorporate reading and writing opportunities, and wacky fun events of the kind young adolescents thrive upon: all night read-a-thons in the school gym, reading graffiti boards in the halls, and reading awards of various sorts. In this way, readers, not just athletes, gain recognition in school.

Staff throughout the school receive training to help them understand and address reading needs of young adolescents and the best ways to meet these needs. In doing so, they are encouraged to expand their own reading. They participate in adult reading groups or serve on selection committees for young adult books. They learn about the books that appeal to young people, how to promote books, how to engage young people with them, and how to use books as a tool for inquiry about important issues of personal and social concern to us all.

In a community of readers, young adolescents are presented with meaningful reading experiences, not only in school but also in the out-of-school hours. The public library plays a crucial role. Rather than treating young people as pariahs without babysitters, ten-to fifteen-year-olds are welcomed into the library and provided with their own space, collections, and activities. Young adult programming offers young people opportunities to have fun with friends as they expand their literacy horizons. Librarians trained to assist young adults help them deepen their knowledge of the library's resources, cultivating the library's future adult patrons and donors in the process.

Support for making the community truly a community

of readers for all young adolescents comes from everyone. Parents enter the circle through school events. Simply making sure that the television is not on all evening and that there is a quiet, comfortable place for their child to read are the first steps. They may also participate in programs that introduce them to young adult books and help them to understand how they can talk to their children about the reading they are doing.

A community of readers includes a large supporting cast, from the youth worker and youth minister to the Boy/Girl Scout or 4-H Leader. Youth activities provide many meaningful literacy opportunities, from brainstorming shopping lists of materials for a camping trip to reading to the elderly or presenting a play. There are roles for business people, media, and local government. Businesses and other community offices often serve as sites for young people's hands-on learning or career education. As they observe adults at work, they learn about the ways literacy serves adults. Business, media, and government leaders also control purse strings and policies that can promote or hinder youths' literacy learning. Young adolescents need reading mentors, supporters, and advocates of all kinds and at all levels.

In short, a community of readers provides young adolescents with:

Reading role models;
Active engagement with books and other reading materials;
Educators and youth-serving professionals who have had professional development about youth literacy;
Effective reading instruction;
Activities to meet the needs of poorer readers;
Reading supported throughout the school environment;
Reading opportunities in the after-school hours and during the summer;
Parents who are encouraged to attend to their young adolescents' reading needs; and,
schools, families, youth agencies, and public libraries that work closely together. (The Middle Grades Reading Network, 1993, pp. 4-7)

Family Involvement: Families are involved in helping their children have access to books, provide a good role model by reading, and are aware of the reading needs of their children.

Full Time School Librarian: The school librarian is not assigned study halls, gifted and talented groups, etc., but rather spends full time in managing the school library, assisting students, and marketing reading to the school.

Middle-Grades Schools: Schools with the majority of their students who are young adolescents, and the majority of the students are in grades five, six, seven, eight, or nine.

Modeling Reading: A practice whereby others set an example by reading for enjoyment in the presence of young adolescents and by reading to them.

Proficient Readers: Students are able to read and understand materials needed to be successful at their grade level.

School-Public Library Cooperation: School and public librarians know each other and work together to encourage voluntary and school-related assignment reading.

Size of Indiana school corporations: School size based on average daily membership enrollment arbitrarily set at: small - up to 1,000 students; medium - 1,001 to 8,000 students; large - more than 8,000 students.

Staff Development: Opportunities for staff to learn about better ways to develop proficient and voluntary readers.

Teachers Under Cover: A program where teachers read and discuss books of interest to them.

Time in the Curriculum: Amount of minutes each day and/or week allocated to reading.

Voluntary Reading: Reading that students do on their own time rather than as a class assignment.

Years of Experience: The number of years served as a licensed public school superintendent.

Youth-Service Agency: A community agency such as the Boys' Club, YMCA/YWCA, or Boy/Girl Scout groups.

# Chapter 2

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

During the course of an extensive search to find related information and research regarding the superintendent's role in developing a community of readers in middle-grades schools, four Educational Research Service searches and five ERIC searches were undertaken. Research departments of eleven other organizations as well as the Indiana Department of Education Library, the Indiana State Library, and various authors of research studies were contacted. An exhaustive search of the literature was made with little definitive result. No studies were found dealing directly with the specific role of the superintendent and middle school reading; however, references were made as to the influence that a superintendent has on curriculum and instruction, and, in some instances, reading. These references are related to in the Introduction, The Superintendent's Role, and Barriers to Reform of this chapter and are followed by a discussion of the related literature in the areas defined in chapter one as important issues in developing a community of readers, which in summary are: 1. student access to current and

useful trade books; 2. teachers as role models; 3. appropriate professional development for staff; 4. daily time for students to become proficient readers; 5. daily time for students to become voluntary readers; 6. special assistance for students reading below grade level; 7. providing school libraries that attract students and teachers; 8. providing a close and useful relationship with the public library; 9. encouraging parents to support reading; and, 10. providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported. It should be noted that although an attempt is made to separate each issue for discussion purposes, some overlap is appropriate depending on how a particular study is approached.

## Introduction

People can best gain knowledge and understand the thoughts and successes of others through reading (Olcott et al., 1913). It was a famous librarian who once said:

> Through reading, knowledge is made cumulative, so that one generation may stand on the shoulders of the preceding. It is not its intellect that renders the modern world superior to antiquity, but its intellect, plus the heritage of two thousand years of thought and discovery transmitted to it through books. (Koopman: The Mastery of Books in Olcott et al., 1913, p. 133)

Reading emphasized as an art, where appreciation, understanding, and familiarity with the way writers use language and how they use the story line to appeal to the reader, should be pursued more than the skill of reading. Students must be motivated to search for their deepest interests so that they can find what it is that they really

want and need to know (Schuster, 1989).

Frank Smith (1988) is adamant about reading and writing being the most important academic function in every area of learning — not just as subject areas into and of themselves. The way reading and writing instruction is conveyed to students shows educational technology at its best.

Reading and writing is not something we should do primarily to be used to develop a competent and competitive work force. We read and write to reveal:

> each other's responses, to connect ourselves more fully with the human world, and to strengthen the habit of truth-telling in our midst. No national resource is more precious — more essential to our promise and our true security — than that habit. And no knowledge is more essential to the preservation of the ideal of community than the knowledge of common feeling and common longing. (DeMott, 1990, p. 6)

In community people can share identity as well as contribute, unite, and share their interests and abilities. They can even find strength together in diversity.

> A human hunger lies deep inside us all: The desire for community. . . . The best of teachers remain conscious of more than just fragmented pieces of themselves and their students. They remain mindful of the connections of their lives and the lives of the children they teach, and they act on that larger knowledge in their daily practice in the classroom. (Hulsebosch and Ayers, 1990, pp. 192, 193)

Teachers, then, create a sense of community within the classroom as they share this knowledge and help students to understand all aspects of reading, including the ability to think critically, and then act on knowledge gained which empowers both teachers and students to expand beyond the classroom community into the larger societal community

(Hulsebosch and Ayers, 1990). Thus a community of readers is born, and children become members of the "literacy club . . . with the implicit act of mutual acceptance: 'You're one of us. . . .' There are no special admission requirements, no entry fees" (Smith, 1988, p. 37).

However, when Thompson and McCreadie (1992) explored the nature of a community of readers, they found that three to four key players are critical to its development. These players have a commitment to students, are influential within the school context, and are involved in staff development. This literacy environment develops over a period of years and is strongly supported by the administration. The researchers also found, while conducting four different case studies in Indiana Middle/Junior High Schools, that there are several commonalities among communities of readers that include a vision and goals held by key players and participants. These goals focus the efforts to promote reading within the classroom and the entire school community.

## The Superintendent's Role

Crowson (1987) indicates that the area of the superintendent has not been researched enough to give any substantial documented evidence as to the impact of the superintendent's role as a key player in instruction. What is available does show that those superintendents who maintain a "strong district presence" (p. 60) and maintain a close watch over academic achievement come from the

districts considered as instructionally effective. Crowson (1987) is quick to point out that much more evidence is needed to prove that the superintendent is not simply the choreographer of the process.

Even though there is a prolific amount of literature encompassing the superintendency, there is very little discussion on what it is really about (Pitner and Ogawa, 1981), and according to Hart and Ogawa (1987), little attention has been paid to how much influence the superintendent actually has on academic achievement. Hart and Ogawa (1987) turn to the business environment to prove their case regarding the importance of effective leadership by the chief executive officer of an organization and found in their search that the CEO does have an influence, especially on subordinates such as principals, in the school setting.

Pitner and Ogawa (1987) then studied all Kindergarten through grade twelve school districts in California and concluded that the superintendent accounted for between 7.7 percent (sixth-grade reading) and 3.1 percent (twelfth-grade reading) of variance in standardized achievement test scores. In contrast, research shows that chief executive officers in the business world account for 7.5 percent of variance in company profit and mayors account for 5.0 to 15.1 percent of variance in municipal budgets. Even though more conclusive research needs to be done, the evidence may be understated, and many other organizational components

that demand a superintendent's attention can affect outcomes. Hart and Ogawa (1987) are convinced that the goals a superintendent embraces for a school corporation are accomplished through effective leadership.

Hallinger and Murphy (1982) studied research from 1975 through 1982 and found evidence that the leadership role of the school principal in improving instruction is apparent, but evidence is emerging that shows effective schools have superintendents who develop policies that promote instructional leadership and see that they are implemented. Goodlad (1983, pp. 4-7) says that the agenda of promoting school improvement through effectiva leadership cannot be left entirely to building principals. The superintendent must be a key player instructionally.

Wimpelberg's (1988) survey of the literature reveals that there is a growing interest in just what the role of a superintendent is and should be. There is evidence that a change in superintendents in a district can affect student achievement, even though the superintendent spends only 1 percent of his time in school buildings. Research over the last twenty years reveals that effective schools cannot be left alone to develop good patterns for teaching and learning; but the superintendent may not be the one to exert a direct influence on the process because of the complex nature of instructional technology and the political nature of the superintendency. Wimpelberg (1988) does conclude, however, that due to the lack of any other predominant

outside forces, the central office and the superintendent have the greatest potential for creating a strong leadership base. "This alone makes a new study of superintendents and instructional leadership imperative" (p. 304).

The superintendent must be a change agent (Millett, 1991) who exhibits visionary leadership and establishes reasonable goals. At the same time, boards must embrace new ideas while meeting fiscal guidelines as well as federal and state mandates (Indiana board members, Jones & Lindsay, 1991). The resulting effect of visionary leadership is that of transforming lives and ultimately the institutions involved (Hesselbein, 1992).

Bottaglia, Buehler, and French (1992) colorfully compare the superintendency to that of a referee, animal trainer, priest/confessor, novelist, construction engineer, cavalry officer, finance minister, and cheerleader. But overall, the superintendent "is a conductor, using his baton to lead the show or his whistle to announce the next train — whether it is the soul train, wagon train, or gravy train" (p. 49). Karol (1992) goes on to say that this conductor must be skilled in blending the personalities of the organization into harmony by using leadership skills that get the best out of staff by working with them, letting the administrators and staff participate in decision-making, and orchestrate growth through effective staff development activities that put them in touch with other communities and educators. Superintendents must be willing to take risks

and be open to change because . . .

> if the superintendent fails, the nation fails. The quality of this country's public education institution directly affects this country's ability to compete in a global economic, political, and social arena.
>
> That is a responsibility that cannot be taken lightly. Developing our most important resource is a matter of survival. (p. 49)

Within this framework, the superintendent is responsible for the quality within the schools and must work on the system to effect the connections and constancy necessary to provide the support needed both systematically and systemically. This enables the superintendent, as a strong leader, to involve staff in developing the curricular priorities and expectations needed for successful schools (Maddux, 1990; Rhodes, 1990).

Langlois (1989) and Herman (1989) make it clear that school boards and communities want their superintendents to be strong instructional leaders who have an in-depth knowledge of long-range planning, staff development, evaluation methods, curriculum, school culture, and climate. Priorities should be placed on high expectations and achievements of both students and staff.

Bottoms (1992) emphasizes that even though the superintendent is often separated from the intricacies of specific school happenings, he makes major decisions that impact the philosophy of the entire system. As a key player, s/he must strive to continually come up with ideas that fit a fluid society, meet the changing needs of children, and fit the finances of the local district.

As we move into the 1990s, Harvey, Frase, and Larick (1992) declare that there is a new-age superintendent emerging. This new breed of superintendent must be a strong instructional leader who is willing to commit financial resources and his time to instruction. "Clearly, the fate of public education will depend, as never before, on the superintendent's ability to anticipate and envision a totally new system of education" (p. 9), which prepares our children for the twenty-first century.

Maeroff (1993) declares that the superintendent is the change agent who sets the climate for the entire organization. His/her attitude affects everyone. S/he should communicate to his/her staff that they have the freedom to grow, learn, and take risks through conservative decision-making. Fraatz (1987) says that it is the superintendent's responsibility to have a vision that includes an overall long-range plan for instructional improvement and to see that it is implemented, updated, and on-going. Particular emphasis should be placed on the reading and language arts areas.

Townsend (1993) strongly believes that the superintendent must be the one to make clear the vision, goals, and mission of the district to all students, staff, and community members. S/he is responsible for focusing the district on not only the general academic achievement of students but personal achievement as well. Townsend (1993) quite aptly quotes Terrance Deal in calling the

superintendent's role "the keeper of the dream" (p. 25).

Schlechty and Cole (1992) also stress the importance of the superintendent's role in supporting staff and students as they grow and develop professionally, academically, and personally while trying new innovations and thinking creatively and critically in the learning process. However, the primary role of the superintendent is to:

> promote the articulation and persistent pursuit of a compelling vision of education in the community, to encourage and support creative leadership at all levels of the system, to ensure that all personnel focus on providing high-quality experiences for students, and to educate the community about education. (p. 48)

As the superintendent encourages principals and teachers to grow and develop, s/he must be knowledgeable of research so that s/he can be a teacher of principals and help them apply their knowledge and expertise to the daily instructional process. Principals, then, will be better prepared to help teachers in organizing and managing academic learning time for maximum benefit to students (Conran, 1989). These efforts can make the difference between a superintendent being a leader who, as Achilles (1992) describes, translates a vision and goals into action thereby creating change or merely being a status-quo manager. In either case it is important that some sense of stability, balance, and organization remain.

The American Association of School Administrators (1988) completed a study indicating that administrators have the greatest influence on how the curriculum and instructional process is carried out. The results of this

study point out that one educational leader with a far-reaching vision can have a strong impact on the curriculum process in a school district. Interestingly enough, Myers (1992) found, in his survey of literature, that the curriculum and instructional process was ranked number one in importance as a skill needed for the superintendency in the 1990s and beyond. In another study, Pajak and Glickman (1989) interviewed thirty staff members, including superintendents, in each of three school districts. These school districts had demonstrated improved student achievement for three consecutive school years. Pajak and Glickman (1989) found that the superintendent and central office supervisors were key players in facilitating the improvement process. Superintendents in these school districts were committed to curriculum and instruction and focused on children as being their first priority.

Thomas Shannon (1991), the executive director of the National School Boards' Association, willingly admits that school board members know that the superintendent is the "most important public executive in a community, and they want to work together with superintendents as productively as possible" (p. 9). Shannon (1991) goes on to state that the superintendent — "like any chief executive officer of any private or public enterprise — is a premier change agent and most vulnerable lightning rod of changes" (p. 9).

Murphy and Hallinger (1986), and Peterson, Murphy, and Hallinger (1987) do indeed show that the superintendency is

coming under close scrutiny during this era of school reform. The literature on effective schools clearly indicates that successful schools are those in which superintendents are highly involved in the instructional process. No school board would want to hire a superintendent or approve policies that would lead to system-wide improvement without keeping this in mind. In their interviews with twelve superintendents in school districts considered to be instructionally effective, Murphy and Hallinger (1986) found that these superintendents play an active role in the instructional process and systematically direct and control the technical core within a leadership style that fits the culture and bureaucratic practices and policies within their school districts.

To be more specific, Sweeney (1982) states that the research on effective schools further indicates that there is a decided emphasis on reading in effective schools. Of the one hundred top educators selected by the Executive Educator journal for the Hallmark of Excellence in 1989, seventy-three were superintendents. Only eighteen of these superintendents rated reading and/or curriculum and instruction as being a top priority. These superintendents, who feel they are effective, relate similar views: Winters (in Executive Educator, 1989) says he knows the curriculum design and works easily with all instructional aspects and personnel in the school system. Four of his Kansas City schools have won United States excellence awards. He prides

himself for being cited as having outstanding reading and library programs. Daniel (in Executive Educator, 1989) feels that his successful schools stem from parent advisory groups and special schools where every faculty member teaches mathematics and reading/language skills for the first three hours daily. Students in grades six, nine, and ten receive special attention in reading if student test scores give an indication of weakness. Marcus (in Executive Educator, 1989) has cut the dropout rate in half by raising standardized test scores in reading and math. He attributes this success through creative solutions to problems, long-range planning, goal setting, effective staff development, and an employee-fitness program. Raymond (in Executive Educator, 1989) has instituted Saturday tutorial classes for 25,000 - 35,000 failing students, restructured the curriculum, promoted parent involvement, and established staff development programs. Howarth (in Executive Educator, 1989) relates his determination to make sure vocational students have special training in reading and writing skills. Dobson (in Executive Educator, 1989) was one of the first superintendents in his area to hire full-time librarians. Wallace (in Executive Educator, 1989) sums it all up when he says "To be a good administrator nowadays, you have to be an educational leader, not just a manager" (p. A29).

Dulaney (1988) recommends that superintendents should make certain that they are fully knowledgeable of the key

components of a comprehensive reading improvement program to ensure that all students become proficient readers. The superintendent is the key player in providing the stimulus for a program that should stress curriculum, methodology, organization, administration, and staff development. "The support and active involvement of the local superintendent of education in this reading improvement process cannot be overestimated" (p. 185).

Shanker (1990) cites that evidence of the need for the superintendent's involvement is apparent in the 1988 NAEP study which relates that students can perform basic reading and writing tasks by the time they get to high school, but of the 75 percent left who have not dropped out, only 5 percent could comprehend a "moderately complex paragraph" (p. 346). Chall (in Aaron et al., 1990) makes a bold statement when she declares that, "when these students are dropping out of high school in large numbers, it is because they cannot read, they cannot do the work required in subject areas. . . . Once the students cannot read, they cannot seem to make it in other subject areas" (p. 304).

This problem is not just one of the 1980s and 1990s. Wolfthal (1981) cites that in 1926 reading failure was the major cause of grade-level retention. In 1938, 20 to 30 percent of high school freshmen were judged to be two to three years behind in reading. In 1947, by third grade, 40 percent of students were reading below grade level. In 1948, 29 percent of school freshman were reading three to

five years below grade level. But the concern over reading started much earlier than the 1920s. Wolfthal (1981) goes on to relate that Horace Mann, too, was concerned, and was quoted in 1838 as stating: "More than eleven-twelfths of all the children in the reading classes in our schools do not understand the meaning of the words they read" (p. 663). The Lilly Endowment Occasional Report (Lilly Endowment, 1989) cites that in an on-going study of the Iowa Silent Reading test, which took place in 1945, 1976, and 1986, it was revealed that in 1976 sixth-grade students averaged a quarter of a year below grade level in reading and by 1986, the gap had widened to one-half a year below grade level. Suburban schools were only slightly below the expected levels while urban schools dropped to one and one-half years below the expected level by the time students reached the tenth grade.

## Barriers to Reading Reform

Even though research is scanty and possibly under-stated, it has been demonstrated that superintendents can and should be a direct influence on the instructional process, including reading, in their school districts. Their multifaceted role, however, emits many barriers that pull them in other directions.

Thompson and McCreadie (1992), as they explored four Indiana middle-grades schools during their investigations of middle-grades reading programs, found that despite the fact that the "overall climate in these schools promotes the

growth of a community" (p. 68) of readers, all four schools were faced with teacher contract issues and budget constraints. Even though the superintendent is continually faced with balancing the various facets of administration such as staff development, policy, public relations, and finances, s/he "must provide leadership to encourage the participation of personnel in working toward the goal of an improved language arts and literacy program" (Corr, 1988, p. 111).

School reform, the need for new buildings, changing school populations, increased academic and social needs, as well as retraining staff, and increased costs for special needs students will continue to plague school budgets and increase pressure on superintendents (Bush, 1993; Nudel, 1991). Increased concern over "finances, community awareness as well as problems with curricular organization and school structure" (Humphrey, 1993, October, p. 1) continue to hinder the development of a community of readers in Indiana. Dorman, Lipsitz, and Verner (1985) plead with educators to spend more time being responsive to the needs of young adolescents despite the problems with "budgets, buses, and buildings" (p. 47).

Shanker (1990) is very blunt when he relates that, "Only the United States has local school boards as we know them and superintendents who must maintain majority support of a board while trying to manage the system. And none of these countries has our huge school bureaucracy" (p. 350).

There is no doubt that the superintendent is the key figure in controlling the budget, and effective control is a part of being an effective leader (Harrington-Lueker, 1989), but this power depends on the relationship between the school board and the superintendent as to how much leverage the board affords the superintendent (Shannon, 1992) so that s/he can deal with such issues as low reading scores, teachers' desires and needs, political forces, deteriorating buildings, and problems associated with poverty (Murphy, 1991); and now, in the 1980s and 1990s we've added other issues including school choice, site-based management, increased teacher benefits, pre-school education, extended-day kindergarten, and non-educational children's services.

To compound the problems, inequity and inequality in school revenues are increasing, as are state and national demands on costly testing programs and accountability linked to performance. Middle school and high school reforms, which include pressure for students to stay in school and graduate, as well as to increase performance in reading, writing, and other basic skills (Odden, 1992), will be a figment of the modern day society for some time to come.

The barriers to reading reform and the superintendent's role in developing a community of readers in middle schools will never be obliterated. It is only when school boards and superintendents change the perception of the superintendent's role to that of instructional leader will

the focus turn more towards finding ways to help children succeed in reading. The superintendent's direct involvement as a key player in regard to the ten areas under study in this dissertation is critical to ensure that middle-grades students will graduate from high school, be viable candidates for the future work force in Indiana, and become life-long readers.

A challenge for superintendents to realize the importance of their role in middle-grades reading programs comes from a bold statement by Lipsitz (in Davidson and Koppenhaver, 1993):

> In schools across the country, adults are playing a game of make-believe with young people. They say in effect, "We will make-believe we know that you can't read, if you will make-believe that you can." Motivation for maintaining this mutual deception ranges from apathy to cynicism to despair. Lacking training tools, and, too often, vision, the adults charged with preparing our youth for enriched and enriching futures condemn them to a game of chance more cruel than a classroom charade: a life spent impoverished by functional illiteracy. (p. vii)

The school district superintendent is the central key figure and role model for education in the local community, and the most influential stakeholder in the quest of implementing these suggestions which in summary are to: 1. provide the financial resources and see to it that students have access to current and useful trade books; 2. encourage teachers to become reading role models; 3. ensure that teachers receive adequate professional development in reading instruction; 4. stress to principals and teachers the importance of providing daily time in

reading instruction in content areas classes, as well as reading classes so that students can become proficient readers; 5. emphasize to principals and teachers that regular daily time must be allocated for voluntary reading; 6. encourage staff to create effective ways to assist the reluctant and non-proficient readers; 7. support librarians in providing attractive and well-stocked library-media centers; 8. encourage librarians, principals, and teachers to establish a close working relationship with public libraries; 9. emphasize to the community the importance of reading and encourage parental and community support; and, 10. stress the importance to all staff that they must provide an environment where reading is encouraged and supported (Middle Grades Reading Network, 1993; Humphrey, 1993, Spring).

### Access to Current and Useful Trade Books

The American Association of School Librarians believe that school libraries should be adding two books per student per year. A national survey taken in 1990 reveals that $6.09 per student is spent on books in Junior High Schools per year (Davidson & Koppenhaver, 1993).

Callison (1989) cites that the 1987 Williams' report shows that during the 1985-86 school year, library expenditures showed a decline of 16 percent since the 1978-79 school year. The data were based on a national sample of 4,500 kindergarten through grade twelve schools. Further, the United States Department of Education reports

that 502 new books, on the average, were purchased in 1974 compared to 315 in 1985.

Miller and Shontz (1993), in a 1992 extensive survey of 778 school libraries in fifty states, discovered that the amount of per-pupil expenditure on books was $5.55 in 1988, $5.48 in 1990, and $5.88 in 1992. The 1992 increase was swallowed by inflation and actually reflects a decline in expenditures. "Regardless of how the data are presented . . . book collections are stagnant" (p. 31).

A telephone call on October 18, 1993 to Jacie Morris, learning resources director for the Indiana Department of Education, revealed that during the calendar year 1992, an average of .124 percent of the Indiana school corporations' general fund budgets (or about $5.05 per student) was spent on library books. Since the average children's book in 1992 cost $16.64 (Miller & Shontz, 1993), Indiana schools are purchasing only about one-third book per student per year.

Humphrey (1993, April) declares that library books are current for no more than ten years and those not frequently used should be weeded. "Books which have become obsolete in content, style, or theme should be eliminated by the library which aims at building a vital useful collection" (Curkey & Broderick, 1985). Until this task is accomplished, there may be as much as 75 percent of library collections outdated even if .5 books per student are purchased annually as replacements (Humphrey, 1992, March, No. 4). Davidson and Koppenhaver (1993) contend that it takes at least three

books per child per year to keep collections current.

Gerhardt (1986) reports in a 1985-86 study that if schools bought the minimum recommended two books per student per year, it would cost $10,000 per year for new book purchases. This would put a strain on present school budgets considering that the average school library spends $2,798 per year on books and $7,577 on all library materials, including books. Humphrey (1990) projects that if a school with 500 students would purchase just one book per student per year, a school would increase its collection by 5,000 books over a ten-year period.

In the public sector, more books, magazines, and newspapers are being sold with the heaviest buyers being between the ages of thirty-four and fifty-four years of age. Public libraries circulated 987 million books in 1977 and 1329 million by 1989, which is a 35-percent increase. The per capital increase from 1977 to 1989 was 25 percent (Fowles, 1993).

Even though families are purchasing more books and public library circulation is increasing, children of low-income families must rely more on school libraries because they do not tend to frequent public libraries, and their parent/s do not have the funds to purchase books (McGill-Franzen, & Allington, 1993). As children enter the adolescent-age period, they do not tend to read as much, and even though the reasons are not clear, there are indications that it is because of the limited background experiences

that they bring to what they need to read in the middle grades (Pikulaski in Flood et al., 1991) which is all the more reason to provide ample access to a wide variety of reading materials.

If children are to become proficient readers and enjoy reading, they certainly need to spend more time in voluntary reading. Without ample access to books and materials that interest and stimulate them to want to read, it will be difficult to foster the habit of reading for pleasure (Davidson & Koppenhaver, 1993; Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990; Chall & Curtis in Flood et al., 1991; Carbo, 1983; McGill-Franzen and Allington, 1993; Scheer, 1993; Moniuszko, 1992; Milam, 1932). Further, Miller and Shontz (1993) report that "access to books is being seriously curtailed by the rapidly deteriorating state of school library collections and community unwillingness to fund them" (p. 27).

To compound the problem, a new issue has entered the picture. Will computers and technology take away students' desire to read books, and will more money go into computers and technology so that fewer books will be available to students? Smith's (1988) opinion is that computers can offer an appealing alternative to extend reading opportunities and promote a creative reading/writing process. He is opposed to most skill/drill and game type computer activities unless they stimulate creativity and problem-solving. Callison (in Woolls, 1990) relates that

studies now show that if teachers evaluate computer software and videos efficiently, these types of technology can be a reliable learning resource for students.

Miller and Shontz (1993) are legitimately concerned about library book budgets being stagnant at the 1960s level because more is being spent for computers and related technological materials. To complicate matters even more, the librarian's job description is becoming broadened to include the supervision and purchase of expanded media services, as well as training teachers to become technologically literate.

One of the most revealing and recent studies completed was the Colorado Study of 1991-92 that used data compiled in 1988-89 by the Colorado Department of Education. Grades one, two, four, and five were included in the 211 schools surveyed. Findings showed that the size of library collections as well as the amount expended on books, the number of library staff, and the instructional role of the librarians have a definite impact on academic achievement (Lance et al., 1992). Other researchers now substantiate that claim by concurring that academic achievement improves, attitudes toward reading improve when large numbers of trade books are provided for children to read, and time is provided for them to read (Flood & Lapp in Flood et al., 1991; Galla & Cullinan in Flood et al., 1991; Krashen, 1993; Dougherty, 1991). These findings are supported by a number of authors and educators who feel that it is imperative to a

strong overall reading program that plenty of trade books are provided to students in libraries and classrooms (Tway, 1988; Johnson & Johnson, 1988; Sucher, Manning, & Manning, 1980; Krashen, 1993; Roe, 1992). However, it should be further noted that experiences of parents and educators, as well as results of various studies, tell us that if students have this multitude of interesting books and reading materials available to them, they will read more (Morrow, 1987; Wood, 1993; Binkley, 1989; Center for the Study of Reading, date NA, Milam, 1932). Sanacore (1992) adds to the list of proponents as a result of a 1988 study where autobiographies of lifelong readers were reviewed. The results showed that students who had a wide variety of materials and books to read caused them to be motivated to read more and become better readers.

It stands to reason then that one should listen to Squire (1987) when he sets forth the challenge to keep school libraries open for extended hours, including evenings and weekends, despite bus schedules and library schedules that restrict library use. Students should be able to go to the library several times a week to browse and read, as they please. Squire strongly feels that "we have no recourse but to reorganize the school day to make accessibility to books a more permanent dimension of the life of young people" (p. 8).

Providing access to books in classrooms is a "key characteristic for building a community of readers in the

classroom" (Fractor, Woodruff, Martinez, & Teale, 1993, p. 477). They go on to cite a 1969 study by Bissett where he found that in the 183 classrooms surveyed, children read 50 percent more books if they had ample books to read in their classroom libraries. He recommends the classroom library have at least five to six books per child. Bissett discovered that 72 percent of kindergarten classrooms have libraries, but only 25.8 percent of fifth-grade classrooms have libraries. According to the survey of literature presented in this chapter, one could assume that the decline in access to books as students move into Junior High School has a negative effect on how much they read and their academic achievement as well.

## Adults and Teachers as Good Reading Role Models

Klein (1991) quotes the 1991 United States Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander, as saying, "Improving America's schools will require tackling a wide range of complicated social issues, ranging from poverty and illiteracy to anti-intellectualism and parental apathy" (p. 4). Children learn to see the world as they observe people around them. They need to be around their parents as they grow up "and share their parents' perceptions of the world. The cultures we learn and the social roles we acquire are those of people with whom we identify, of the kind of person we see ourselves as being" (Smith, 1988, pp. 40, 41).

"The importance of acquiring the ability to read in today's society is unquestioned" (Cardarelli, 1992, p. 3).

Cardarelli further acknowledges that conversations with middle school teachers confirm that students do not read as much as they enter the middle-grades arena, and children will not learn to enjoy reading if teachers and parents as role models do not set the tone. Studies indicate that teachers really do not read much. This is disappointing because teachers "must believe reading is important as manifested by reading that occurs in their own lives" (Cardarelli, 1992, p. 4).

Cardarelli, who worked with over 700 teachers in the Teachers Under Cover program, reported that teacher education students, who participated in studies on what teachers thought about their own development, admitted on the whole that they did not read much and recalled their middle-school reading experiences as being rather dull. In one study, Gray and Tray (1986) found that out of eighty elementary education majors questioned, only twenty-nine were presently reading a book, and fifty-one were not currently reading a book. A disappointing result was that only forty-one of the teacher education students read for enjoyment. In another study, Manna and Misheff (1987) found that the majority of teacher education graduate students felt their school reading experiences were also pretty boring, but 83 percent of these teacher education students suggested that:

> enthusiasm for reading is caught not taught . . . Teachers should serve as models for the kinds of benefits and rewards that reading promises. . . . A balance must be provided in terms of the private

> rewards learned from individualized reading and the "shared joy of discovery" that can accompany collaborative experiences. (Manna and Misheff, 1987, p. 166)

Reading is indeed the most important subject taught in schools, and adequate time and attention is not given to it. If teachers are to be successful at teaching reading, they must be readers themselves (Olcott et al., 1913).

Krashen (1993) reports that studies show children do more leisure reading if they observe their parents reading. These parents may also do other things to encourage reading, but the modeling effect was found to be the important factor. He further found studies suggesting that during silent sustained reading time, teachers should model good reading habits by reading themselves — not doing other work.

We now know research says that children learn from what they see others doing. Being literate is so important that it can not only change thought but the world as well. It has this power (Smith, 1989; Olcott et al., 1913). But the question remains: Do children observe this power being used in schools? If children are to be motivated to enjoy reading, teachers themselves have to read and pass on this enthusiasm to students as they become good reading models (Diakiw & Beatty, 1991; Smith, 1989; Clark, 1991; Sanacore, 1990; Corbett & Blum, 1993; Duffy, 1990; Buikema & Graves, 1993; Wells, 1990; Buttenwieser, 1992; Binkley, 1989; Winograd & Smith, 1987; Sanacore, 1993; Cox, 1993).

Rief (1990) strongly advocates sharing literature with middle-school children to motivate them to read. Wood

(1993) suggests book talks as a way to entice students to read and recommends at least fifteen minutes per day for silent reading where the teacher serves as a positive role model by reading, too.

We know that "the teacher plays a critical role in influencing children's attitudes toward voluntary reading. Children live what they learn" (Morrow, 1985, p. 20). It is, therefore, vital that teachers regularly read aloud to children, share and discuss stories with them, and see to it that children are exposed to good literature across the curriculum (Morrow, 1985; MacGinitie, 1991).

## Professional Development

Staff development is expensive. Why do we need it anyway?

> All teachers need to expand and improve their teaching abilities, whether they are beginning or experienced teachers. The needs of students change from year to year, and new ideas become available to educators for better meeting those needs. In addition, staff development can do much to motivate and inspire teachers to greater heights. (Sucher, Manning, & Manning, 1980, p. 82)

The most effective way to improve the reading program is through a well-planned and implemented staff development process (Henk & Moore, 1992; Levine, 1991; Strong & Silver et al., 1990; Binkley, 1989) that is supported by administrators. Principals, superintendents, and central office administrators must be involved and committed if all aspects of the reading process are to improve (Henk & Moore, 1992; Walla, 1988; Sucher, Manning, & Manning, 1980;

Doremus, 1985; Elam, Cramer, & Brodinsky, 1988; Cronin, Meadows, and Sinatra, 1990). It is imperative, however, that the administrator know the culture of the organization and characteristics of the staff before beginning the planning process (Daresh, 1991). In addition, administrators should ensure that a professional library, complete with books, journals, videos, and other instructional resources, is available and kept up-to-date (Henk & Moore, 1992).

Sanacore (1988) has embarked upon a comprehensive review of research and found that effective training changes beliefs and attitudes of teachers in a positive way, and transfers to student learning in the classroom. Effective in-service training has particularly affected a change in beliefs about the importance of independent reading. Within the context of this training, teachers with innovative ideas and experience regarding independent reading present the concept; demonstrate the concept; and give participants practice, feedback, and later conduct a follow-up. Davidson and Koppenhaver (1993) found that in the most successful reading programs and projects they investigated, a strong in-service program with staff input played an important part in the overall program planning. They found a "strong positive correlation between the quality of a program and the quality and quantity of the training and development activities offered to the staff. They have regular opportunities built into their schedules for sharing with

their co-workers" (p. 235).

Wood and Thompson (1980) complain that too many dollars of school budgets are earmarked for personnel and too little for staff development that should be based on four components: "(a) teaching reading . . . objectives; (b) diagnostic and prescriptive instructional skills; (c) clinical supervision; and (d) follow-up, maintenance, and refinement. Training in each component closely follows the steps of experiential learning" (p. 377). Wood and Thompson (1980) further cite that as a result of training 1,000 staff members in reading and math instructional techniques over a period of eight years, there was a definite increase in student achievement. In the same vein, Weber (1987) reports that Joyce and Showers found, after studying inservice training projects that involved various subject areas in over 200 research projects, the same commonalities. A number of other studies also show these same staff development features; such as having adequate time for in-service training followed by practice or modeling strategies, and peer or consultant feedback, coaching, and follow-up when teachers return to their classrooms (Levine, 1991; Weber, 1987; Weisz, 1993; Bergman & Schuder, 1993; Ogle, 1989).

A survey completed by 460 of Indiana's 615 public middle, junior, and senior high schools in 1991 revealed that Indiana teachers spend only 3.8 hours per year in staff development in reading. This includes conferences and

college courses. Just 51 schools, or 11.2 percent, provide some staff development and 283, or 62.1 percent, have no planned in-service training for reading teachers. Some teachers do participate in professional organizations, however. That leaves 122 schools, or 22.7 percent, that neither participate in professional organizations nor are provided with formal in-service training (Humphrey, 1992, March, No. 4). In contrast, there are many school districts in the United States that require extensive staff development programs. For instance, Abington School District in Abington, Pennsylvania (1988) mandates nineteen hours of professional development each year, and the Pasadena, California Unified School District (1988) requires at least 150 hours of in-service training over a five-year period.

Elam, Cramer, and Brodinsky (1986) stress that staff development should focus not only on professional needs but individual needs as well. They recognize superintendent William Pelain of Howell Township Public Schools, New Jersey as a leader in the area of staff development. He stresses the importance of the link between teacher satisfaction and morale with their output in the classroom. He also feels strongly that emphasis should be placed on "stress management, problem-solving skills, nutrition and exercise, financial planning, time management, and interpersonal relationships" (Elam, Cramer, & Brodinsky, 1986, p. 11) as an integral part of the total staff development program so

that staff can better learn to cope with every aspect of day-to-day living. The renewed motivation and enthusiasm created by this total focus approach transfers to the classroom, causing teachers to become more effective in the teaching of reading and content areas as well. Further, Lafaneer of Greenburg, Pennsylvania (in Elam, Cramer, & Brodinsky, 1986) and other superintendents who were questioned feel that the goal of staff development should be on-going with a distinct focus on educating children in the best way possible.

Laughter (1980) discovered the importance of this focus as she conducted a study in grades four through eight in a North Carolina School District. The reading/language development of middle-grades students was enough of a concern that it was decided to place emphasis on an on-going staff development program and study the progress of students in twelve classes of fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades whose teachers were participants in the program. The results were positive in that students showed "remarkable success in almost every test objective for all three years" (p. 1).

## Time For Students To Become Proficient Readers

For an overall view of reading proficiency in the United States, one should take at least a cursory look at the National Assessment of Educational Progress Exam (NAEP) reports. This National Report Card plots trends from 1971, 1975, 1980, 1984, 1988, 1990, and 1992 on a continuous

scale. Trends show some improvement over the years, but we are still a long way from reaching needed goals (Carroll, 1987; McLean & Goldstein, 1988). A summary of results across grade levels four, eight, and twelve over the last two decades reveals that basically our students have mastered decoding skills, and can understand specific and sequential information. Yet when the material becomes more complicated, only a few students are competent. For thirteen-year-olds, only 10 percent in 1971 and 1975, and 11 percent in 1980, 1984, 1988, and 1990 could comprehend complicated material. Basically there has not been much change in the last twenty years. However, for some reason, research is showing that as students move into the adolescent years, they tend to read less (Valencia, Hiebert, & Kapinus, 1992; Mullis, Owen, & Phillips, 1990; Langer, Applebee, Mullis, & Foertsh, 1990; Kirsch, & Jungeblut, 1986).

The 1992 summary tells us that 59 percent (64 percent in Indiana) of fourth graders, 69 percent of eighth graders, and 75 percent of twelfth graders have reached the basic level, while only 25 percent (27 percent in Indiana) of fourth graders, 28 percent of eighth graders, and 37 percent of twelfth graders showed competency in reading more complicated material. These 1992 statistics (Mullis, Campbell, & Farstrup, 1993) basically indicate that reading scores have improved dramatically in the last two years. Further analytical summaries will reveal just how

comparisons of data were made with the earlier studies and if changes in the tests have affected comparability.

It is interesting to note that students in all three grades who read more often on their own time had a higher reading proficiency score than those who did not spend as much time reading. Fewer than 25 percent of eighth-grade students read voluntarily on a regular basis. Those students who discussed what they had read with family and friends at least weekly also had a higher reading proficiency score (Mullis, Campbell, & Farstrup, 1993).

Farr, Fay, Myles, and Ginsberg (1987) used the Iowa Silent Reading Test, and found that sixth-grade reading achievement has increased from a grade equivalent of 6.2 in 1944-45 to 6.6 in 1986. The expected level was 10.2. On the other hand, tenth-grade students showed slight declines. The authors suggest that the longer students are in school, the more difficult it is for proficiency to be maintained. Therefore, reasons that account for the decline should be investigated. Could it be they spend less time reading because of apathy or a dislike for reading? It seems that we need to concentrate more on instilling a positive attitude toward reading, and teach students how to better use what they read. These authors believe that it is not higher test scores that are needed but "higher test scores that truly reflect higher levels of reading" (p. 99). Dr. John Cannell (in Watters, 1988) also became suspicious of what standardized test scores actually reflect. He found

that 90 percent of school districts surveyed claimed that their students' reading test scores were above national norms while in essence they were not. He discovered that students were not placed correctly and were two to three years behind academically. The overall result was a lowered self-esteem among students and higher dropout rates.

Calman and Mee (1990) interviewed twenty-four teachers in grades four, five, and six to determine the status of the reading program in their New York schools and determine ways to enrich the program. In summary they found that both the school and neighborhood libraries were being widely used. Teachers did express a need for more books in the library and their classrooms, however. Teachers discovered they needed to read aloud more to students and use a wider variety of materials with less emphasis on practice and drill activities. Both teachers and students agreed that more time should be spent to become better readers and reading just for fun. Teachers also felt a distinct need for more in-service training.

As a result of studying a number of reading programs including STAR, PAL, DRTA, HILT, and the Kenosha Model, Davidson and Koppenhaver (1993) found commonalities in all successful programs which they formulated into the following suggestions for middle-grade teachers:

> 1) Spend a high proportion of time on teaching reading and writing. . . . 2) Teach skills in context. . . . 3) Stress silent reading. . . . 4) Teach strategies for reading comprehension. . . . 5) Build on background information and experience. . . . 6) Integrate speaking and listening with reading and

> writing. . . . 7) Focus on writing. . . . 8) Use modeling as a teaching technique. . . . 9) Use involvement or experienced-based curriculum approaches that foster conceptual development. . . . 10) Facilitate discussions rather than lead them. . . . 11) Use varied groupings and value collaborative learning. (pp. 228-232)

The programs studied tended to enhance learning beyond the basic level of literacy at a stage when test scores tend to drop.

Smith (1985) and Quellmalz and Hoskyn (1988) found that test scores improved and children began reading more on their own when strategies included familiar criteria as that used in the Davidson and Koppenhaver studies; and NAEP studies also indicate that when students are presented with a variety of challenging academic experiences, they are "more likely to become proficient readers" (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1988, p. 52). This variety of experiences should include teaching reading across the curriculum (Winograd & Paris, 1989; Noble, 1982; Early, 1988; Carnegie Council for Adolescent Development, 1989; Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990), and should also include providing a wide variety of reading and learning materials and references without excessive reliance on basal textbooks (Smith, 1988; Winograd & Paris, 1989; Merenbloom, 1986; Fuhler, 1992).

At the middle-grades level, more time should be spent on teaching reading instead of so much emphasis being placed essentially on skill and drill (Carroll, 1987; Buttenwiesner, 1992; Duffey, 1990; Squire, 1987; Calfee & Wadleigh, 1992; Smith, 1988; Center for the Study of

Reading, date NA; Glickman, 1990; David, 1991) because most errors made by students are related to a lack of ability to understand and interpret what is being read (Olcott et al., 1913). Reading then should continue to be taught, not only across the curriculum, but as a separate subject in the middle grades (Noble, 1982; Lipsitz, 1984; Humphrey, 1992, March, No. 4; Malinka & Millikan, 1991).

A recent study was conducted in thirty-two nations that included tests and surveys given to 210,000 fourteen-year-olds. Results showed that proficient readers had access to more reading materials at school, were given more homework, had more individualized instruction, larger school libraries, regular silent reading time in class, more time spent on teaching the languages, had teachers that spoke their own language, and interestingly enough, had female teachers (Elley, 1992).

A study conducted by Roebke (1990) on seventh-grade students revealed that students who were given ample time to read, had a choice of materials, interacted with peers, and had freedom from time limits and quotas became better readers and had better attitudes. Atwell (1991) further confirmed this concept when she completed a study on seventy-five eighth-grade students that included eight special education students. The students were taught how to read literature and read an average of thirty-five full-length works. They were given time to read in reading class and took time to read independently at home. Scores

on standardized achievement tests averaged at the seventy-second percentile. These students' average scores were at the fifty-fourth percentile the year before when they were not participating in this type of direct instruction and given ample time to read.

There is a national concern about dropout rates and illiterate adults, but the problems with proficient reading ability begin much earlier, about the time children pass the stage of learning-to-read into that of reading-to-learn. Chall, Jacobs, and Baldwin, (1990) were aware of this concern and decided to extensively test and study thirty low-income students in second, fourth, and sixth grades. They followed these students through third, fifth, and seventh grades. Test scores began a decline at the end of fourth grade. The pattern continued until, by seventh grade, almost all students scored below grade level. Those students who read more tended to have higher scores. Students who scored at least one year's growth from one year to the next came from classrooms where more time was spent on direct instruction in reading comprehension and vocabulary, time was spent integrating reading into other subject areas, homework was given regularly, and ample trade books and other reading materials were available in classrooms and libraries. It was easily concluded that "comprehension gains were associated with allocated time for reading and explicit comprehension instruction" (p. 151).

Walberg (1984) and his staff investigated nearly 3,000

studies done on factors affecting learning that ultimately leads to educational productivity. The psychological impact of mastery learning ranked first, accelerative programs ranked second, and training in reading (which stressed comprehension, skimming, adjusting reading speed, and finding answers to questions) ranked third out of twenty-seven areas. It was also noted that quality time spent on instruction, time for leisure reading, and parent-child conversations about school and daily events contributed to student success.

Goodlad (1983, pp. 8-19) found that in 129 elementary schools, 362 junior high schools, and 525 senior high schools, the elementary schools gave priority to teaching reading, while at the junior high and high school levels, reading was taught primarily as a remedial subject. There was less teacher enthusiasm at the junior and senior high school levels and too much time, in Goodlad's opinion, was spent on repetition of skills, use of workbooks and textbooks, while the areas of creative writing and time for reading and reading instruction were neglected. Students were graduating from high school with little exposure to well-known literary works. What is really happening in the schools regarding working on children's ability to read is not happening the way parents in the sample indicated they wanted.

> Part of our failure stems from a great irony. Those who still live in the past confidently set the norms for educating those who live in the future. The time has come for us to look more carefully into what

> we have wrought and the alternatives we might seriously endeavor to create. Each of us has that opportunity. (p. 19)

Pikulaski (in Flood et al., 1991) is more optimistic as he examined twenty-four different studies and concluded that adolescents do indeed still need time for reading instruction in grades four through eight and will benefit from direct instruction in comprehension and vocabulary development. Pearson and Gallagher (1983) also declare that the research clearly shows reading skills will improve if time is spent on direct instruction of reading.

### Time For Students To Become Voluntary Readers

Anecdotal and correlational studies are available to show that voluntary reading should be an integral part of the reading program because it allows students to gain practice in skills they have been taught. Children will enjoy voluntary reading more, however, if they have the opportunity to select interesting materials to read and are in a physical environment that is supportive (Morrow in Flood et al., 1991; Roe, 1992; Wood, 1993; Vansciver & Fleetwood, 1993; Fielding & Roller, 1992; Morrow, 1985; Atwell, 1991; Milam, 1932).

Flood and Lapp (in Flood et al., 1991) have surveyed the literature and found data that convinces them that students who engage in voluntary reading regularly out-perform readers who do not read voluntarily. Within this context, voluntary reading can help students assess information in the middle-school content areas, read novels

or information by particular authors they like, and read and sort out information they may need in writing activities (Duffey, 1990).

Krashen (1993) reviewed several studies where he found that when students read more on a regular basis, their test scores in reading improved. Other authors who have surveyed the literature found the results to be similar (Bennett, 1985; Lipsitz, 1984; Sanacore, 1988; Morrow, 1985; Morrow, 1987; Pearson, 1993; Greaney & Hegarty, 1987).

Since we know that voluntary reading is:

> related to overall reading proficiency, one of the most important goals of any reading program is the development of recreational reading habits that will continue throughout an individual's lifetime. However, as children reach pre-adolescence, their interest in outside reading frequently decreases dramatically. A school-sponsored program to motivate children to continue recreational reading is one way to ensure that this valuable habit will continue. The STORY BOWL concept is predicated on the notion of a "community of readers," including parents, teachers, librarians, and administrators, who share readily-available books through discussion, silent reading, and reading aloud activities culminating in a friendly competition. (Hodges, 1988, p. 63)

Hodges (1988) found that the STORY BOWL project did indeed develop more proficient readers who read more and enjoyed reading because they were encouraged and supported by a community of readers.

Another success story was discovered when Coley (1983) analyzed Project Read, a program where free paperback books were distributed to schools in all fifty states. She compiled results from 2,800 students in seventh, eighth, and ninth grades and found that where staff training was

provided, students read independently daily, and were provided with an ample selection of books, attitudes toward recreational reading improved. An eight-month gain in reading scores occurred over a six-month period for seventh and eighth-grade students. Ninth-grade students made at least normal gains that exceeded expected levels. Coley (1983) also noticed that there was a dramatic increase in comprehension scores of seventh and eighth-grade students.

Greaney (1980) studied 920 fifth-grade students and Greaney and Hegarty (1987) studied 138 fifth-grade students in Dublin, Ireland and discovered that in both studies there was a positive correlation between reading achievement and leisure reading. In both studies, an improvement in attitude toward reading for pleasure also showed a positive correlation with reading achievement.

Sanacore (1988) surveyed the research and found that teachers generally do not exhibit a favorable attitude toward taking class time for independent reading. Parents also ranked voluntary reading low as compared to students spending time on basic reading skills. In contrast, both practical experience and research findings indicate that attitudes toward voluntary reading on the part of teachers and parents need to be positive if children are to be lifelong readers. Morrow's (1985) study concurs with these findings, and Krashen (1993) also found research supporting the fact that traditional reading tasks and workbook exercises did not increase reading test scores as much as

time spent on voluntary reading.

It is a fact that if we do not encourage children to be independent readers, they will not take it upon themselves to learn to select books they would want to read, reading achievement will be lower, and in-depth knowledge of content area and subject matter will not be as proficient. If teachers and other significant adults have a positive attitude and model independent reading, they send the message to children that reading should be an important lifetime habit (Sanacore, 1990; Sanacore, 1992; Davidson & Koppenhaver, 1993; Greaney & Hegarty, 1987; Atwell, 1991; Fielding & Roller, 1992; Cox, 1993).

Students will then better understand themselves as readers, as well as the literature they read. The pleasure of reading will become "a means of helping them connect the way they read to the way they write, to develop a sense of pleasure in the medium of language, and to explore the cultures of the writer and of the community of readers in the classroom" (Purves, 1993, p. 360). There should be two outcomes to reading literature: "to enjoy literature and to read literature to understand oneself and others. These outcomes should be nurtured every time a literary selection is taught; they do not need to be scope-and-sequenced" (Glatthorn, 1988, p. 48).

When 1,560 Indiana high school students were divided into 384 groups and asked which among a variety of different areas they felt were the most important to them that they

learned in school, 63 percent of the groups emphasized personal skills and values, 44 percent listed social skills, 28 percent stressed mathematics, and only 6 percent of the groups emphasized reading as being most important (Erickson, 1991). Could this be because, as the literature shows, that too much time is spent on skill and drill and formal instruction and not enough on recreational reading when they are in elementary and middle school? Our children may be getting the instruction needed to make them literate, but studies show many are aliterate. Fractor et al., (1993) reported on a study done by Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding that showed where 50 percent of fifth graders read only four minutes a day, 30 percent read two minutes a day (outside of school), and 10 percent did not read at all. The remaining 10 percent were not even mentioned. Greaney's (1980) study revealed that only 5.4 percent of the 920 students he surveyed spent time on recreational reading, and 20 percent spent no time reading outside of school. Fractor et al., (1993) goes on to say that 45 percent of American adults do not read books, and 60 percent of American households did not buy one book during the year 1990. If the aliteracy problem is going to be solved, parents and teachers need to commit themselves to encouraging time for voluntary reading and read more themselves.

The NAEP studies show that the more children read for pleasure, the higher their test scores are. The problem is that the older children become, the less they read.

Three-fourths of the fourth graders tested read at least on a weekly basis while only 16 percent of eighth graders and only 50 percent of high school seniors read this often. Sixteen percent of fourth graders, 22 percent of eighth graders, and 29 percent of twelfth graders read either very little or not at all. Television seemed to be a fair competitor since 69 percent of fourth graders, 71 percent of eighth graders, and 48 percent of twelfth graders watched television for three to four hours a day (Mullis, Owen, and Phillips, 1990).

Humphrey (1992, March, No. 4) surveyed 291 middle schools in Indiana and found that 13.4 percent of the middle schools reported that only 20 percent of their students read for pleasure. There is a definite decline on the part of students to read books not connected to school work. The reasons teachers gave were lack of interest (78.8%), books are not current (2.9%), poor reading skills (2.7%), and others (15.6%) which included poor reading role models at home and home environments where education and reading were not a priority.

McEady-Gillead (1989) studied 723 sixth-grade students in six middle schools in Northern California and discovered that students say they are more interested in watching television and spending time with their friends than in reading for fun. Reading ranked fifth to watching television and second to spending time with friends. Video movies and video games also ranked more important than

recreational reading. The challenge remains that parents and educators need to outsmart other media and keep trying to find ways to entice youth away from the technological media back to books. The "best final test of an excellent reading program is not only that students can read, but also that they do read. Through the recreational reading phase of the reading program, students can be helped to develop life-time habits of selecting reading as one of their frequent primary leisure-time activities" (Sucher, Manning, & Manning, 1980, p. 7).

### Below Grade-Level Students Are Provided With Special Assistance

Students have more difficulty in reading than any other subject because all subjects require reading in order to understand the content. Even the bright or average child can have a disability that prevents adequate development of reading ability which necessitates additional special instruction (Blanchard, 1928).

Becker (1990) reports that many students entering middle schools could clearly benefit from extra direct instruction in reading because they are severely behind other students in reading. He found that 85 percent of middle schools nationally do provide an additional class for students who read below grade level and 61 percent provide a reading class for all or almost all of their students. Becker's estimation is that another 25 percent offer this special class to those in dire need of help. During the

seventh or eighth grades, the overall estimation is that 55 to 60 percent of schools offer a special class for remedial assistance.

The NAEP surveys indicate that students reading below grade level tend to receive more training in word-attack skills and time to read aloud than the better readers. Students reading below grade level are also apt to receive more homework (Langer, Applebee, Mullis, & Foertsch, 1990).

Students at risk of failure can receive remedial and tutorial assistance outside regular reading programs through specially-funded programs such as At Risk or Chapter I. These programs generally stress independent reading as well as direct instruction in deficient skills that are necessary for reading progress (Davidson & Koppenhaver, 1993).

Humphrey (1992, March, No. 4) found that in 1990-91, 85,598 Indiana students received Chapter I remedial reading assistance, but the majority of this help was given to pre-kindergarten through grade five students which leaves the critical middle-grades students with less remedial assistance through the federally funded programs. Indiana has as many as 35,734 students reading two or more grade levels behind their peers and only 61.7 percent were reported receiving help. There were 41,833 seventh and eighth graders eligible for Chapter I services, but only 2,074 (2.4%) were receiving help.

Since the remedial-type students generally have about 1,080 hours of instructional time in school and an average

of about seventy-two hours of extra assistance, mostly from Chapter I and at-risk-type programs that generally take them away from regular classroom instruction, one could hardly expect much improvement in overall academic performance. This places the additional financial burden on the school corporation to provide more funding to help these students (Rotberg & Harvey, 1993).

Many of these special-type programs are provided in resource rooms. Sometimes either special teachers or instructional aides actually work closely with classroom teachers to provide special help within the classroom setting. Those students who are designated as Special Education students are more recently being included on a regular basis in the classroom, usually with special assistance being provided (Sucher, Manning, & Manning, 1980; Noble, 1982). Including special-needs students who read below grade level poses problems that merely providing instructional assistants does not solve. Goldfarb and Salmon (1993) relate that teachers and administrators, by their own admission, need special training so that teachers can cope with the diversity of abilities, learning styles, and other special needs of students. The school librarian can break down barriers in this change process, and can be the catalyst who bridges the gap between regular education and special education by providing staff with professional development materials and sources for assistance. Networking with other librarians to acquire professional

growth materials and then collaborating with teachers to help them through this change process not only proves vital in eliminating the apprehension associated with their theory, but, as Goldfarb and Salmon (1993) have found, the librarian's involvement promotes professional growth, noticeable dedication, and a more positive attitude toward inclusion.

Students in need of special assistance can definitely benefit from different approaches which include extra time to focus on special reading strategies that adjust to their needs, and provide a variety of reading experiences as well as time for independent reading (Oberlin & Shugarman, 1989; Smith, 1990; Epstein & Salinas, 1990). "Slow readers can succeed with the same frequency as faster readers as long as the teacher selects materials and approaches to accommodate the students' learning speeds" (Smith, 1990, p. 416).

Educators are painfully aware that there are too many illiterates and poor readers in this country. By age seventeen, it is estimated that just 19 percent of students who are at risk can read at an acceptable level. An even more startling fact is that 40 percent of the minority youth are illiterate (Carbo, 1987). These youth have a tendency to drop out of school, which confirms research findings that there is a definite connection between students dropping out of school and academic performance. These students may have the necessary reading skills, and do not use them or just have not acquired them. If additional time and specialized

assistance is given to these students so that self-esteem and reading success is achieved, more would stay in school (Rehm, 1991). Rehm (1991) describes one successful program which proved this supposition. The program was initiated by a Texas middle and high school after a seventh grader came forth and said he could not read. Through school and community cooperation, a special tutoring program was set up during the school year and summer months. The tutors also became mentors for these at-risk youth. The program proved that through this type of intervention, attendance, attitude toward school, and reading ability were improved which ultimately led to a more positive self-image and success in school.

Another success story comes from the Montgomery County, Maryland school system where teachers tried what they termed a radical change in goals to help underachievers in reading. Mastering skills in sequential order was not helping the remediation process at any grade level, kindergarten through grade eight, so teachers decided that they had to help students learn how to read. They did this by devising simple strategies for students, and integrating reading and these strategies across the curriculum. Students were also encouraged to read materials and increase their independent reading. Over time, results showed that students were definitely reading more with a better understanding of what they were reading, and most of all, they were enjoying reading (Bergman & Schuder, 1993).

Magner (1991), as a result of his research, criticizes current remedial programs. He found that in a total of five programs, forty-one students in grades six, seven, and eight who had had two to five years of remedial assistance were still earning lower grades than other students. He noted that none of the remedial programs "emphasized instruction in comprehension of expository prose, and only in three of the programs was there any contact between the remedial and content area teachers" (p. 3).

Smith (1985) would argue that the focus is all wrong. We should not be concentrating so much on the instructional methods and materials as on the child. The problem is compounded by the fact that students reading below grade level simply do not read as much as their peers, and comprehension and general reading ability will naturally suffer (Dymock, 1993; Bergman & Schuder, 1992; Smith, 1985).

There are new trends, and research is beginning to support the use of computers and video technology to help direct the attention of at-risk students to developing better comprehension skills, understanding the importance of being literate, and developing problem-solving and critical-thinking skills (Walla, 1988; Chall & Curtis in Flood et al., 1991). This technology can also be used to help students analyze stories. Even using video-disks in conjunction with textbooks is being tried as a way to enhance learning. All of these strategies, however, must be used in conjunction with a "more formal direct kind of

instruction, aimed at building on student strengths, while addressing their needs" (Chall & Curtis in Flood et al., 1991, p. 354).

The Library-Media Center Attracts Students and Teachers

Libraries obviously cannot solve all the reading problems of young people, but they can provide a warm, welcome, and attractive setting for students and staff to explore or just pursue special interests (Matthews, Flum, & Whitney, 1990; Davidson & Koppenhaver, 1993; Barron & Bergen, 1992; Saks & Ford et al., 1989; Humphrey, 1992, March, No. 4; Lewis, 1992; Libraries and the Learning Society, 1985; Scholl, 1987; Langer, Applebee, Mullis, & Foertsch, 1990; Sucher, Manning & Manning, 1980; Thompson, 1991; Haycock, 1991; Childress, 1992). Over time, our school libraries have become the center for instructional innovation in many of our schools (Montgomery, 1992). In order to ensure the success of instructional innovative changes needed as well as accommodate the educational challenges of the future, we must not compromise quality and flexibility of design. Our libraries have to have the physical and educational capacity to meet the needs of students now and in the future (Klasing, 1991).

Squire (1987) is concerned, however, that libraries will become more technological media centers than places where books and students come together. He stresses that librarians should not lose sight of their focus which should be to keep abreast of literary happenings and entice young

people to want to read and spend time reading in the library.

In contrast, Keegan and Westerberg (1991) believe that since we know that the "strategies and behaviors that worked in the industrial age will not work today" (p. 9), we have to restructure our libraries to be more in tune with the information age. Today, we need to make use of the technological advances for our libraries such as computerized data banks, computerized access to other libraries, automated check-out systems, as well as other hypermedia and interactive media. Our goal is to invoke a vision that makes the library the "focal point of the school by producing the informationally literate, lifelong learner. . . . The library's role in this evolutionary process is significant and promising as students increasingly are trained to use technology in libraries to solve problems" (pp. 12, 13). Miller (1991) also realizes that recent technology has changed the focus of libraries from that of providing just reading materials to that of also providing a vast array of technological media that focuses on the learning process. This new era has broadened the role of the librarian to that of a media specialist who must be "technologically literate if the school library media program is to survive into the twenty-first century" (p. 46). Miller (1991) stresses, however, that this emerging technological emphasis should not lessen the focus of time or funding that needs to be spent on reading materials.

Information from NAEP sources tells us that 16 percent of students in fourth grade, 37 percent of students in eighth grade, and 53 percent of seniors rarely or never use the library (Mullis, Owen, & Phillips, 1990). Seventy-three percent of seventh graders checked out library books at least monthly, and 62 percent said they used the library to read or look up information. Students in the top 25 percent of their class used the library to read, take out books, and look up information while those in the bottom 25 percent spent their library time to read and find books on hobbies. "The library is a major resource in the development of students' reading abilities. It serves both as a source of reading materials and as a quiet refuge where students can come to read without being interrupted" (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1988, p. 42).

Didier (1984) confirmed that reading achievement is increased by the use of the library. In her own studies, as well as fifteen other studies she surveyed, she discovered consistently that in the span of the grade levels from kindergarten through the college level, regular usage of the library improves students' library skills, improves overall achievement as well as achievement in specific subject areas, and raises grade-point averages.

Humphrey (1992, March) also reports that regular use of the library affects reading achievement in a positive way. We must provide ample and quality collections in our libraries because they exhibit the meaningful measure of the

caliber of our Indiana middle-grades schools.

## Relationship With The Public Library

Public libraries were an important educational and informational source for some 20 million people in the late 1880s and early 1900s, and today are still the "potentially strongest and most far-reaching community resource for lifelong learning" (Breivik, 1991, p. 6). However, Olcott et al. (1913) warns that libraries should be used with caution. Students should be watched so that they do not read trashy books that would cause them to "read so much that it has an unfavorable influence upon their views of life" (p. 158). As in the past, our young people today still do indeed face many challenges, and the school-public library partnership can be an important catalyst in extending the educational, recreational, and informational reading needs of students and the "transition from structured learning into self-determined lifelong learning. When both libraries are well-supported, they can team up to provide a seamless information and enjoyment resource" (Matthews, Flum, Whitney, 1990, pp. 199, 200). A number of studies have indicated the need for increased services including summer programs for middle-grades and high school youth (Weisner, 1992; Chelton, 1989; Callison, 1993; Nelson, 1993; Callison in Woolls, 1990) and increased cooperation between school and public libraries, which could include visits by public librarians to schools and frequent communication and planning sessions between the librarians

(Herold-Short, 1989; Kistler, 1993; Callison, 1993; Nelson, 1993; Mancall, Lodish, & Springer, 1992).

A 1986 survey of forty-seven Indiana public libraries and 147 secondary school libraries indicated that 90 percent of public librarians thought there should be increased cooperation between school and public librarians, and 71 percent of school librarians agreed. Seventy-four percent of public librarians wanted regular monthly meetings with school librarians, but only 54 percent of school librarians felt these meetings were necessary. Callison also called ninety-five Indiana junior high school librarians and found that 46 percent could not name the local public librarian (Callison, Fink, & Hager, 1989).

Callison (1991) later conducted a national telephone survey involving 147 public libraries. He found that 59 percent of public librarians had not met with school librarians during that year to talk about cooperative-type activities, 46 percent could not name the junior high school librarian, 39 percent of junior high school librarians did not know the public librarian. The follow-up mail survey revealed a most disappointing bit of news in that over 33 percent of the junior high school librarians had no idea what expectations their students had regarding the public library. Callison concluded that there is a definite need for public and school librarians to spend more time communicating, networking, and joining efforts if students are to benefit from library services as they should. Cherry

(1982) comments that one way to bridge the gap could be the housing of public library branches in schools which is not only convenient for users, but provides for excellent communication with school library staff and teachers and is an efficient way to help meet schcol educational and recreational reading needs.

Fitzgibbons and Pungitore (1989) conducted an extensive study of Indiana's 239 public libraries and found that between 70 and 80 percent of the state's libraries provided educationally-related materials to assist students in grades one through eight. Nearly 189,397 students visited the public libraries in 1987. Students in grades nine through twelve were able to find help with school work in 80 percent of the libraries. Homework support (18%) was the service selected as the most prominent. Seventy-seven percent of the libraries encouraged classes to visit the library, and 56 percent of the librarians visited schools to reach 184,850 children.

Summer reading programs were offered by 86 percent of the libraries. These programs were of great benefit to students (Weisner, 1992; Nelson, 1993). Fitzgibbons & Pungitore (1989) specifically report that regular summer reading significantly increases vocabulary test scores of students; inasmuch as school libraries are rarely open in the summer months, public libraries are left to take up the slack in this most vital service.

## Encourage Parents To Support Reading

One of the most discussed, debated, and documented issues throughout curricular history is the need for parental support and involvement in the educational lives of children. "The power of parents in the reading program cannot be underestimated" (Sucher, Manning, & Manning, 1980, p. 31). The teacher's role is to stimulate the child's interest in reading books, and parents should cooperate by "guiding the children in their reading. . . . Young people will never become proficient readers by what they do in school alone. The school reading must be supplemented by reading at home" (Olcott et al., 1913, p. 157).

The 1988 NAEP findings suggest that students who scored in the proficient readers' category came from home environments where achievement in school was important. These students had their own books to read at home. The more books they had, the higher they scored in reading proficiency. Eighth and twelfth-grade students did not have as many books as fourth graders (Langer, Applebee, Mullis & Foertsch, 1990). "A long series of previous studies has shown that children who grow up in environments that support reading activities develop better reading skills, as do those students who read a lot both in school and at home" (Mullis, Owen, & Phillips, 1990, p. 55). The 1988 NAEP results for grades three, seven, and eleven also show that home support in reading and other academic areas show gains in reading proficiency (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1988).

Schumm (1992) found similar results from his survey of the literature. Children who read regularly at home are more proficient readers, have better attitudes toward reading, and pay better attention in class. He was rather surprised to discover that students enjoyed the social aspects of discussing with family members what they had read. Allen, Stevenson, and Boher in Scott-Jones (1988) also report that the teachers they surveyed felt that school performance improves in students of all ages when parents are involved.

A survey of the literature shows that the more formal education parents have, the more likely they are to model and encourage reading in their children (Morrow, 1987; Van Sciver, 1993) and be involved in school activities (Scott-Jones, 1988). However, Walde and Baker (1990) remind us that quality of involvement is important. Parents who, themselves, lack basic skills in reading and do not have a positive attitude toward education cannot be expected to be of much help to their children in reinforcing basic skills at home. Other studies also show that children read more when their parents encourage reading, take their children to the library, and see to it that many books are available in the home for children to read (Morrow, 1985; Morrow, 1987; Humphrey, 1970; Shefelbine, 1991; Krashen, 1993; Zager, 1989).

Simic (1992) conducted pre-surveys at sixty-seven sites and twenty-eight post surveys involving Indiana parents and

their middle-school children to find out the effectiveness of the Parents Sharing Books Program which encourages parents to read with their children. Pre-survey results indicated that 80 percent of parents liked to read, but only 20 percent had a regular time for reading, and just 43 percent of the children read for fun, even though 66 percent said they like to read. Post-survey information revealed that 65 percent of parents read regularly and 21 percent were trying to set a regular time for reading. Other positive results of the program were evident in both parent and student responses, which indicated that parents and children discussed books and other reading materials with each other, talked about school and personal matters, and read to each other on a more frequent basis.

Smith and Simic (1993) indicate that overall program-significant benefits were evident, but it was clear that success was due to strong school leadership. In the final analysis, results revealed that "parents will make reading a priority when they are shown meaningful approaches for accomplishing those ends. Almost 92 percent of the parents and approximately 89 percent of the students felt they benefitted from the PSB program" (pp. 47, 48). Buttenwieser (1992) supports the Parents Sharing Books program, and stresses the importance of parents modeling good reading habits. Other educators confirm Simic's findings that regularly reading with children can promote good reading habits (Evans, 1992; Shefelbine, 1991; Zager

1989).

Levine and Jump (1990) report that Indiana families and schools are committed to forming partnerships which are imperative since research strongly indicates that parental involvement improves student achievement at all grade levels. Further, "parents can be the most powerful influence in their children's lives and do not want to be left out of the educational process" (p. 14). Russell (1990) adds, in the Carnegie Quarterly report, that adolescents feel more comfortable going to parents for guidance and moral support if the support system is positive, but too many students today come from broken or poverty-stricken homes and are faced with other problems which include a lack of interest in student success in reading and other educational endeavors.

Bauch (1990) also cites that the evidence is clear that parent involvement improves achievement, and parental attitude toward school improves attendance and reduces school dropout rates. The Carnegie Council for Adolescent Development Report (1989) agrees with these findings, but disappointedly cites that the home/school partnership declines appreciably by the time children reach middle school. Part of the problem is because middle schools and high schools do not encourage parental involvement. Fredericks and Rasinski (1990, November) admit that teachers are often unprepared to deal with parental participation and often look on it as an invasion of their territory; but a

well-rounded reading program needs the regular involvement of parents, and "promoting parent participation can be one of the most important tasks we tackle as educators, for it will certainly have a lasting effect on the educational success of our students" (p. 267). Every attempt should be made to recruit parents and community members to support and endorse the school's reading program. Participation in promoting the goals and objectives of the overall program can only have a positive effect on student learning (Fredericks & Rosinski, 1990, February). While working with various school-wide reading projects, conducting various studies, and surveying the literature, Davidson and Koppenhaver (1993), Noble (1982), and Cole and Williams (1990) consistently confirm that parental support and involvement ensures successful reading programs.

## Supportive Reading Environment

In order to motivate students to want to read and enjoy reading as a lifelong habit, they must have the encouragement and support of administrators, teachers, parents, and the community. The school should provide a supportive physical, instructional, and cultural climate that nurtures an interest in reading and promotes reading achievement as well.

The aesthetic quality of the classroom should include a library corner that entices children to read and seek knowledge (Morrow in Flood et al., 1991; Sucher, Manning, & Manning, 1980; Rauch, 1990; Krashen, 1993; Roe, 1992). It

should promote a relaxed atmosphere with sofas, pillows, plants, rugs or maybe even a loft. Decorative bulletin boards, hanging mobiles, or whatever else promotes an appearance where reading is encouraged should be used (Sucher, Manning, and Manning, 1980; Merenbloom, 1986; Rauch, 1990; Krashen, 1993; Morrow in Flood et al., 1991).

The way the classroom is arranged is also an important factor. Work areas, reading centers, tables, and/or desks grouped for cooperative work and student interactions can foster total literacy development as students share their reading experiences with others in an atmosphere of support, trust, and warmth (Cairney & Langbien, 1989). Morrow (in Flood et al., 1991) has specified that studies illustrate that the physical characteristics of a classroom clearly affect the desire of children to want to read. "However, the very same studies indicate that without the support of teachers who introduce the materials and feature books in daily routines, the physical factors alone will not succeed" (p. 687).

Davidson and Koppenhaver (1993) found, in all of the reading projects they studied, that the physical and instructional climates of the entire school complex emanated the theme that reading was an enjoyable event. Classrooms had libraries, and reading themes and posters were on walls and bulletin boards. Students were continually encouraged, personally assisted, and praised frequently. Books and reading materials abounded everywhere. Children were

encouraged to interact and share reading experiences with each other. The superintendent and school principal visibly supported the programs, not only in the buildings toward students and teachers, but to school boards and the community. These administrators also made themselves available to students and teachers to participate in activities and offer assistance because they were knowledgeable about what was going on in classrooms.

Librarians can also turn kids on to reading and help to create an overall school atmosphere that supports reading. They can initiate school-wide projects and themes; sponsor read-a-thons; and create a warm, exciting atmosphere in the school library where books are displayed attractively, interests are created, new books are continually acquired, and students are read to and taught library skills (Childress, 1992; Krashen, 1993; Finn & McKinney, 1986).

"Good instruction is much easier to achieve in a classroom environment in which teachers and students have built a community of learners" (Pearson, 1993, p. 509). In this instructionally-supportive environment, students are encouraged to interact with one another and share reading and writing to gain knowledge. The exchange of ideas and knowledge stimulates a vast array of reading activities supported by the teacher (Pearson, 1993; Roe, 1992; Rauch, 1990) who acts as a mentor and guide "who structures the instructional environment, at the heart of the teaching and learning process — for students need help and support if

they are to continue to grow as language learners and language users" (Applebee in Flood et al., 1991, p. 549).

Just saying the right things, directing programs or arranging staff development is not enough. Superintendents, principals, and other administrators must be directly involved to promote a supportive reading climate in the school. The principal is particularly a key person (Sucher, Manning, & Manning, 1980; Early, 1988; Finn & McKinney, 1986), but naturally must have the support of the superintendent (Corr, 1988). Creating a positive, supportive reading climate involves social relationships between staff and students that foster creativity, feeling, and problem-solving. "This view of literacy should lead to fresh insights and different teaching methods; methods that recognize the part social context plays in meaning making" (Cairney & Langbrien, 1989, p. 561).

Including other support groups, such as parents, community members, grandparents, and friends in this total process will create that coveted community of readers (Bintz, 1993). These active supporters can create an infectious state of "pure pleasure of reading in middle-grade schools. . . . Its impact on students — who observe and take cues from significant adults around them — is immediate and profound, often deeply affecting their behavior. It is one thing to tell youngsters to 'curl up with a good book', but quite another to actually do it — to be (and be seen as) a keen and active reader" (Buttenwieser,

1992, p. 5). Therefore, with the support and commitment of superintendents, principals, and teachers, the promotion of reading achievement and enjoyment that creates lifelong readers can begin and not end at the middle-grades level.

## Summary

Our children are the most important and valuable resource we have. They hold the key to the future. Reading is the kaleidoscope that can envision the unforeseen future. Reading shows our children what the world can be and how they can change their lives and the world to be a better place for everyone.

Children of today are surrounded by a number of entertaining technological-type media and social activities that entice them to read less than their counterparts of several decades ago. Because they read less, they do not read as well, and, therefore, do not do as well in school. Many students experience low self-esteem caused by an inability to do their work which is a result of not being able to read well enough to understand what they read, and ultimately many of them drop out of school.

The middle grades are a critical time for children. Students of this age are not only experiencing changes in physical and mental growth, but must face the challenges of transition from the elementary school to a more structured environment where the focus changes from learning-to-read to reading-to-learn. Research and related literature of numerous educators points out that we must once again begin

to pay particular attention to this critical time in our children's lives.

There are a number of key players who can be a dominate force in developing a community of readers who will support and encourage our middle-grades students to become lifelong readers and learners. The school district's superintendent is regarded as the most influential educator in a school district's community. S/he not only plays a vital role in making decisions about policy and budgets, but the instructional and philosophical goals of a school community as well. S/he is the change agent who sets the climate for the entire school organization and community. The superintendent's attitude affects everyone (Maeroff, 1993). It is her/his responsibility to see that an overall plan for instructional improvement, which should emphasize reading, is implemented, updated, and on-going (Fraatz, 1987).

In their studies and survey of literature, the Middle Grades Reading Network Advisory Board (see Appendix A) and Jack W. Humphrey, the network's director, have uncovered important elements to build a community of readers that will have a positive effect on middle-grades children.

The school district superintendent is the central key figure and role model for education in the local community and the most influential stakeholder in the quest of implementing these suggestions which in summary are to:

1. provide the financial resources and see to it that students have access to current and useful trade books;

2. encourage teachers to become reading role models; 3. ensure that teachers receive adequate professional development in reading instruction; 4. stress to principals and teachers the importance of providing daily time in reading instruction in content-area classes, as well as reading classes, so that students can become proficient readers; 5. emphasize to principals and teachers that regular daily time must be allocated for voluntary reading; 6. encourage staff to create effective ways to assist the reluctant and non-proficient readers; 7. support librarians in providing attractive and well-stocked library-media centers; 8. encourage librarians, principals, and teachers to establish a close working relationship with public libraries; 9. emphasize to the community the importance of reading and encourage parental and community support; and, 10. stress the importance to all staff that they must provide an environment where reading is encouraged and supported (Middle Grades Reading Network, 1993; Humphrey, 1993, Spring).

The Middle Grades Reading Network (1993) Advisory Board sums up the discussion quite well:

> Young adolescents will form the communities of the future. In more than a few brief years, they will be parents, teachers, and leaders. To be successful adults, they must be prepared. Reading, in the broadest possible sense, from the most mundane to the most imaginative purposes, is one of the most critical skills they can obtain. They must not only be proficient readers, but they must be lifelong readers who will, in their turn, pass on skills and pleasure that reading can bring to the next generation. Making Indiana a community of readers is a proposition for today — and for tomorrow. (p. 14)

# Chapter 3

## PROCEDURES

The research design was analytical and statistical in nature. The procedures used are described in this chapter. The first section consists of an explanation of the population. The second section describes the development of the survey instrument used. The third section describes the collection of data. The fourth section describes the compilation of data and the statistical method used to analyze the data.

### Selection of Population

The population of this study constituted those Indiana public school superintendents who were employed by school boards in Indiana public school districts during the 1993-94 school year. The current Indiana public school corporations were identified by records of the Indiana Department of Education. The Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents maintains current data on superintendent positions. These data were used to select superintendents who received surveys.

## Development of the Survey Instrument

An investigative type survey instrument was developed in collaboration with the following Indiana leading reading educators and an experienced superintendent: Loran Braught, professor of education at Indiana State University and director of the Lilly Endowment funded Students' Own Bookshop network; Jack Humphrey, director of the Lilly Endowment's Middle-Grades Reading Network; Jacie Morris, learning resources director for the Indiana Department of Education; Norma Rogers, Chapter I director and coordinator of reading programs for the Monroe County School Corporation in Bloomington; Victor Fisher, retired Superintendent of the Evansville-Vanderburgh County School Corporation; and Linda Snyder, past president of the Indiana State Reading Association and professor of education at Franklin College. The survey was field tested by eight non-practicing and/or retired superintendents. The survey is included in Appendix E.

## Data Collection Procedure

Surveys and cover letters were sent to all superintendents who were employed as public school superintendents in Indiana schools during the 1993-94 school year. The survey and cover letter contained instructions for completing the instrument, a brief summary of critical elements for reading success, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for prompt return to the investigator. A follow-up letter, including a copy of the survey, was sent

approximately three weeks after the initial mailing to those superintendents who had not responded.

## Data Analysis

The investigation sought the answer to the following research question:

> Is there a difference due to: (A) School corporation size; (B) Tenure (experience) as a superintendent; or (C) Number of college reading courses completed by superintendents that affect Indiana Public School Superintendents' perceptions of the category of importance of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, the category of school corporations' practices concerned with the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, or the category of the superintendents' perception of their role regarding the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, nor upon the Indiana superintendents' perceptions of each of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading which are: 1. student access to current and useful trade books; 2. teachers as role models; 3. appropriate professional development for staff; 4. daily time for students to become proficient readers; 5. daily time for students to become voluntary readers; 6. special assistance for students reading below grade level; 7. providing school libraries that attract students and teachers; 8. providing a close and useful

relationship with the public library; 9. encouraging parents to support reading; and 10. providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported?

The research question was answered by the formulation of the null hypothesis:

There is no significant difference due to: (A) School corporation size; (B) Tenure (experience) as a superintendent; or (C) Number of college reading courses completed by superintendents that affect Indiana Public School Superintendents' perceptions of the category of importance of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, the category of school corporations' practices concerned with the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, or the category of the superintendents' perception of their role regarding the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, nor upon the Indiana superintendents' perceptions of each of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading which are: 1. student access to current and useful trade books; 2. teachers as role models; 3. appropriate professional development for staff; 4. daily time for students to become proficient readers; 5. daily time for students to become voluntary readers; 6. special assistance for students reading below grade level; 7. providing school libraries that attract students and teachers; 8. providing a close and useful

relationship with the public library; 9. encouraging parents to support reading; and 10. providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported.

## Calculations of Data for Issues

The distribution of the thirty item survey was coded to identify responses according to defined ranges of school corporation size (small - up to 1,000 students, medium - 1,001 to 8,000 students, large - over 8,000 students), tenure as a superintendent (0-5 years, 6-10 years, over 10 years), or number of college reading courses completed by the superintendent (0-1 courses, 2-4 courses, or more than 4 courses). Survey items were rated by superintendents on a Likert-type scale used to indicate priorities by recording the following defined scores: 0 infers no priority at all, 1 infers almost no priority, 2 infers very little priority, 3 infers some priority, 4 infers considerable priority, and 5 infers top priority. These scores provided the raw data of the study.

The thirty item survey was designed so that ten sets of three adjacent items were established to be related to the same issue. After pre-sorting responses according to the defined ranges of school corporation size, tenure as a superintendent, or number of college reading courses, raw data from each set of three items establishing the independent variable were summed to produce the dependent variable data to calculate the several one-way multivariant analysis of variance (ANOVA) results for each issue.

The specific issues and their related survey items summed for study of the ten issues are as follows:

Issue one: access to current and useful trade books; identified by the sum of data in survey items 1, 2, and 3.

Issue two: teachers as role models; identified by the sum of data in survey items 4, 5, and 6.

Issue three: appropriate professional development; identified by the sum of data in survey items 7, 8, and 9.

Issue four: daily time to become proficient readers; identified by the sum of data in survey items 10, 11, and 12.

Issue five: daily time to become voluntary readers; identified by the sum of data in survey items 13, 14, and 15.

Issue six: special assistance for students reading below grade level; identified by the sum of data in survey items 16, 17, and 18.

Issue seven: providing school libraries that attract students and teachers; identified by the sum of data in survey items 19, 20, and 21.

Issue eight: providing close and useful relationships with the public library; identified by the sum of data in items 22, 23, and 24.

Issue nine: encouraging parents to support reading; identified by the sum of data in survey items 25, 26, and 27.

Issue ten: providing an environment where reading is

encouraged and supported; identified by the sum of data in survey items 28, 29, and 30.

## Calculations of Data for Categories

The distribution of the thirty item survey was coded to identify responses according to defined ranges of school corporation size (small - up to 1,000 students, medium - 1,001 to 8,000 students, large - over 8,000 students), tenure as a superintendent (0-5 years, 6-10 years, over 10 years), or number of college reading courses completed by the superintendent (0-1 courses, 2-4 courses, or more than 4 courses). Survey items were rated by superintendents on a Likert-type scale used to indicate priorities by recording the following defined scores: 0 infers no priority at all, 1 infers almost no priority, 2 infers very little priority, 3 infers some priority, 4 infers considerable priority, and 5 infers top priority. These scores provided the raw data of the study.

The thirty item survey was designed so that three sets of ten systematically established items represented one of the three categories of either the importance of an issue, the school's practices or actions aimed at an issue, or the superintendent's specific role in an issue. After pre-sorting survey responses according to defined ranges of school corporation size, tenure as a superintendent, or number of college reading courses completed, raw data from each set of ten items established to be associated with the

independent variable category were summed to produce data of the dependent variable used in calculation of the several one-way multivariant ANOVA results of each category.

The three established categories and their related ten survey items summed to obtain the dependent variable data are as follows:

Category one: the superintendents' perception of the importance of an issue; identified by the sum of data in survey items 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, and 28.

Category two: the school's practices or actions aimed at an issue; identified by the sum of data in survey items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, and 29.

Category three: the superintendents' perception of their specific role in those issues; identified by the sum of data in survey items 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, and 30.

## Designated Level of Significance

Armed with the statistical analysis established at the .05 level of significance for each of the one-way multivariant ANOVA results, it is possible to discuss the null hypothesis as described by the data from the identified issues and categories for each of the defined ranges of school size, tenure as a superintendent, or college reading courses taken by superintendents included in this survey. Where a significant F-Value was found, individual means were analyzed by virtue of the Duncan Multiple Range Test. Statistical analysis indicates that throughout the study, the between groups degrees of freedom was two and the within

groups degrees of freedom was 289. The critical value of F was determined to be 3.04. Tables are used to describe, explain and display the statistical findings that are reported in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 includes the summary, conclusions, and recommendations supported by the findings.

# Chapter 4

## DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The primary focus of this study was to investigate the perceptions of Indiana public school superintendents regarding their role in influencing the development of a community of readers in Indiana middle-grades schools.

Surveys and cover letters were sent to 297 superintendents who were employed as public school superintendents in Indiana schools during the 1993-94 school year.

The first letter was sent on January 14, 1994. A follow-up letter was mailed on January 31, 1994, to those who had not responded to the original mailing. As noted in Table 4.1, a total of 292 superintendents responded to the mailings for a return rate of 98 percent.

Table 4.1

Survey Instruments Mailed and Returned

| Subjects | Number Sent | Number Returned | Percent Returned |
|---|---|---|---|
| Superintendents of Indiana Public School Corporations | 297 | 292 | 98 |

Survey items were rated by superintendents on a Likert-type scale used to indicate priorities by recording the following defined scores: 0 infers no priority at all, 1 infers almost no priority, 2 infers very little priority, 3 infers some priority, 4 infers considerable priority, and 5 infers top priority. The data collected from the 292 respondents was utilized to test the null hypothesis. The findings, as they relate to the null hypothesis, are found in this chapter.

## The Null Hypothesis

A one-way analysis of variance was used to test the null hypothesis ($H_1$):

There is no significant difference due to: (A) School corporation size; (B) Tenure (experience) as a superintendent; or (C) Number of college reading courses completed by superintendents that affect Indiana Public School Superintendents' perceptions of the category of importance of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, the category of school corporations' practices concerned with the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, or the category of the superintendents' perception of their role regarding the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, nor upon the Indiana superintendents' perceptions of each of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading which are: 1. student access to current and useful trade books; 2. teachers as role models; 3. appropriate professional

development for staff; 4. daily time for students to become proficient readers; 5. daily time for students to become voluntary readers; 6. special assistance for students reading below grade level; 7. providing school libraries that attract students and teachers; 8. providing a close and useful relationship with the public library; 9. encouraging parents to support reading; and 10. providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported.

The findings are illustrated in Tables 4.2 through 4.40. A summary of each finding is presented following the applicable table. Table 4.41 summarizes tables 4.2 through 4.40 by indicating the F probability at the .05 level of significance, and the Duncan Multiple Range Test is used to analyze individual and total means for each category and the ten selected issues. The summary tables, Table 4.42 and Table 4.43, show the calculated means and summary of individual survey items regarding the superintendents' perception of the importance of each survey item, the practices of the school corporation, and the superintendents' perception of their role with regard to each of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading. Table 4.44 reports the ranking of superintendents' perceptions regarding middle-school reading issues. Additionally, each individual survey item multivariate test of significance at the .05 level for school corporation size (size), tenure (experience) as a superintendent, and number

of college reading courses completed (courses), can be found in Appendix F.

When an ANOVA F-Value was found to be significant at the .05 level, the individual means were analyzed by virtue of the Duncan Multiple Range Test, and the significant differences were noted by an asterisk. When a significant F-Value was not identified, the significant differences found by the Duncan Multiple Range Test were also noted by an asterisk but may be considered to be due to chance.

Table 4.2

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of the Importance of Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | .0381 | .0190 | .0725 | .9301 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 75.8736 | .2625 | | |
| Total | 291 | 75.9116 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small | 48 | 16 | 4.0708 |
| Medium | 223 | 77 | 4.0700 |
| Large | 21 | 7 | 4.1143 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 4.0733 |

The size of Indiana school corporations was not a

significant factor (.9301) in how superintendents perceived the importance of selected middle-grades reading issues in their corporations. There was no significant difference among small (mean = 4.0708), medium (mean = 4.0700), or large (mean = 4.1143) school corporations. The mean perception of all superintendents was 4.0733 (considerable priority).

Table 4.3

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of the Practices of the School Corporation Regarding Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | .0722 | .0361 | .1091 | .8967 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 95.5874 | .3308 | | |
| Total | 291 | 95.6596 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small | 48 | 16 | 3.9146 |
| Medium | 223 | 77 | 3.8830 |
| Large | 21 | 7 | 3.8476 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.8856 |

The size of Indiana school corporations was not a significant factor (.8967) in how superintendents perceived the practices of their school corporations regarding

selected middle-grades reading issues. There was no significant difference among small (mean = 3.9146), medium (mean = 3.8830), and large (mean = 3.8476) school corporations. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.8856 (some priority).

Table 4.4

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of the Superintendent's Role Regarding Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | .3092 | .1546 | .2863 | .7512 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 156.0378 | .5399 | | |
| Total | 291 | 156.3470 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small | 48 | 16 | 3.5000 |
| Medium | 223 | 77 | 3.5179 |
| Large | 21 | 7 | 3.6381 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.5236 |

The size of Indiana school corporations was not a significant factor (.7512) in how superintendents perceived their role regarding selected issues related to middle-grades reading issues. There was no significant difference among small (mean = 3.5000), medium (mean = 3.5179), and

large (mean = 3.6381) school corporations. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.5236 (some priority).

Table 4.5

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Student Access to Current and Useful Trade Books

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | .3993 | .1997 | .2864 | .7511 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 201.4348 | .6970 | | |
| Total | 291 | 201.8341 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small | 48 | 16 | 3.4792 |
| Medium | 223 | 77 | 3.4753 |
| Large | 21 | 7 | 3.6190 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.4863 |

The size of Indiana school corporations was not a significant factor (.7511) in how superintendents perceived student access to current and useful trade books. There was no significant difference among small (mean = 3.4792), medium (mean = 3.4753), and large (mean = 3.6190) school corporations. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.4863 (some priority).

Table 4.6

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Teachers as Role Models

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 1.0558 | .5279 | .8841 | .4142 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 172.5648 | .5971 | | |
| Total | 291 | 173.6206 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small | 48 | 16 | 3.8333 |
| Medium | 223 | 77 | 3.7982 |
| Large | 21 | 7 | 4.0317 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.8208 |

The size of Indiana school corporations was not a significant factor (.4142) in how superintendents perceived teachers as role models. There was no significant difference among small (mean = 3.8333), medium (mean = 3.7982), and large (mean = 4.0317) school corporations. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.8208 (some priority).

Table 4.7

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Appropriate Professional Development for Staff

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | .6189 | .3094 | .5002 | .6069 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 178.7890 | .6186 | | |
| Total | 291 | 179.4079 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small | 48 | 16 | 3.8681 |
| Medium | 223 | 77 | 3.7429 |
| Large | 21 | 7 | 3.7619 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.7648 |

The size of Indiana school corporations was not a significant factor (.6069) in how superintendents perceived appropriate professional development for staff. There was no significant difference among small (mean = 3.8681), medium (mean = 3.7429), or large (mean = 3.7619) school corporations. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.7648 (some priority).

Table 4.8

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Daily time for Students to Become Proficient Readers

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 1.0820 | .5410 | .7791 | .4598 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 200.6714 | .6944 | | |
| Total | 291 | 201.7534 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small | 48 | 16 | 3.7639 |
| Medium | 223 | 77 | 3.6741 |
| Large | 21 | 7 | 3.4921 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.6758 |

The size of Indiana school corporations was not a significant factor (.4598) in how superintendents perceived the practices of their school corporations regarding selected middle-grades reading issues. There was no significant difference among small (mean = 3.7639), medium (mean = 3.6741), and large (mean = 3.4921) school corporations. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.6758 (some priority).

Table 4.9

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Daily Time for Students to Become Voluntary Readers

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 1.0462 | .5231 | .7133 | .4909 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 211.9321 | .7333 | | |
| Total | 291 | 212.9783 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small | 48 | 16 | 3.1597 |
| Medium | 223 | 77 | 3.3169 |
| Large | 21 | 7 | 3.3492 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.2934 |

The size of Indiana school corporations was not a significant factor (.4909) in how superintendents perceived daily time for students to become voluntary readers. There was no significant difference among small (mean = 3.1597), medium (mean = 3.3169), and large (mean = 3.3492) school corporations. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.2934 (some priority).

Table 4.10

**One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Special Assistance for Students Reading Below Grade Level**

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | .2494 | .1247 | .2730 | .7613 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 132.0291 | .4568 | | |
| Total | 291 | 132.2785 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small | 48 | 16 | 4.1181 |
| Medium | 223 | 77 | 4.1958 |
| Large | 21 | 7 | 4.1587 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 4.1804 |

The size of Indiana school corporations was not a significant factor (.7613) in how superintendents perceived special assistance for students reading below grade level. There was no significant difference among small (mean = 4.1181), medium (mean = 4.1958), and large (mean = 4.1587) school corporations. The mean perception of all superintendents was 4.1804 (considerable priority).

Table 4.11

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Providing School Libraries that Attract Students and Teachers

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | .2975 | .1487 | .3216 | .7252 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 133.6447 | .4624 | | |
| Total | 291 | 133.9422 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small | 48 | 16 | 4.2847 |
| Medium | 223 | 77 | 4.2152 |
| Large | 21 | 7 | 4.3016 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 4.2329 |

The size of Indiana school corporations was not a significant factor (.7252) in how superintendents perceived providing school libraries that attract students and teachers. There was no significant difference among small (mean = 4.2847), medium (mean = 4.2152), and large (mean = 4.3016) school corporations. The mean perception of all superintendents was 4.2329 (considerable priority).

Table 4.12

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Providing a Close and Useful Relationship with the Public Library

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | .0553 | .0276 | .0624 | .9395 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 127.9702 | .4428 | | |
| Total | 291 | 128.0255 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small | 48 | 16 | 3.8194 |
| Medium | 223 | 77 | 3.8565 |
| Large | 21 | 7 | 3.8571 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.8505 |

The size of Indiana school corporations was not a significant factor (.9395) in how superintendents perceived providing a close and useful relationship with the public library. There was no significant difference among small (mean = 3.8194), medium (mean = 3.8565), and large (mean = 3.8571) school corporations. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.8505 (some priority).

Table 4.13

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Encouraging Parents to Support Reading

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | .8095 | .4048 | .6450 | .5254 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 181.3564 | .6275 | | |
| Total | 291 | 182.1659 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small | 48 | 16 | 3.7986 |
| Medium | 223 | 77 | 3.7788 |
| Large | 21 | 7 | 3.9841 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.7968 |

The size of Indiana school corporations was not a significant factor (.5254) in how superintendents perceived encouraging parents to support reading. There was no significant difference among small (mean = 3.7986), medium (mean = 3.7788), and large (mean = 3.9841) school corporations. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.7968 (some priority).

Table 4.14

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Size of the Superintendent's School Corporation and His/Her Perception of Providing an Environment Where Reading is Encouraged and Supported

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | .1084 | .0542 | .1099 | .8959 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 142.4335 | .4928 | | |
| Total | 291 | 142.5419 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small | 48 | 16 | 4.1597 |
| Medium | 223 | 77 | 4.1824 |
| Large | 21 | 7 | 4.1111 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 4.1735 |

The size of Indiana school corporations was not a significant factor (.8959) in how superintendents perceived providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported. There was no significant difference among small (mean = 4.1597), medium (mean = 4.1824), and large (mean = 4.1111) school corporations. The mean perception of all superintendents was 4.1735 (considerable priority).

Table 4.15

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of the Importance of Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 1.1643 | .5821 | 2.2507 | .1072 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 74.7474 | .2586 | | |
| Total | 291 | 75.9116 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-5 yrs. | 115 | 39 | 4.1487 |
| 6-10 yrs. | 59 | 21 | 3.9932 |
| 11+ yrs. | 118 | 40 | 4.0398 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 4.0733 |

The length of tenure (experience) as a superintendent was not a significant factor (.1072) as to how superintendents perceived the importance of selected middle-grades reading issues in their corporations. There was no significant difference among superintendents who had 0-5 years (mean = 4.1487), 6-10 years (mean = 3.9932), or 11 + years (mean = 4.0398) of experience as a superintendent. The mean perception of all superintendents was 4.0733 (considerable priority).

Table 4.16

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of the Practices of the School Corporation Regarding Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | .8499 | .4250 | 1.2954 | .2754 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 94.8097 | .3281 | | |
| Total | 291 | 95.6596 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-5 yrs. | 115 | 39 | 3.9487 |
| 6-10 yrs. | 59 | 21 | 3.8119 |
| 11+ yrs. | 118 | 40 | 3.8610 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.8856 |

The length of tenure (experience) as a superintendent was not a significant factor (.2754) in how superintendents perceived the practices of their school corporations regarding selected middle-grades reading issues. There was no significant difference among superintendents who had 0-5 years (mean = 3.9487), 6-10 years (mean = 3.8119), or 11 + years (mean = 3.8610) of experience as a superintendent. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.8856 (some priority).

Table 4.17

One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of the Superintendent's Role Regarding Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 3.0041 | 1.5020 | 2.8308 | .0606 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 153.3429 | .5306 | | |
| Total | 291 | 156.3470 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-5 yrs. | 115 | 39 | 3.6487* |
| 6-10 yrs. | 59 | 21 | 3.4220 |
| 11+ yrs. | 118 | 40 | 3.4525 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.5236 |

* significant at the .05 level by virtue of the Duncan Multiple Range Test, but may be considered to be due to chance.

The length of tenure (experience) as a superintendent was not a significant factor (.0606) in how superintendents perceived their role regarding selected issues related to middle-grades reading. However, those superintendents who had 0-5 years (mean = 3.6487) years as a superintendent perceived their role regarding reading issues as significantly more important than those superintendents who had either 6-10 years (mean = 3.4220) or 11 + years (mean =

3.4525) of experience as a superintendent. There was no significant difference between superintendents who had 6-10 years or 11 + years of experience as a superintendent. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.5236 (some priority).

Table 4.18

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Student Access to Current and Useful Trade Books

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | .0486 | .0243 | .0348 | .9658 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 201.7855 | .6982 | | |
| Total | 291 | 201.8341 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-5 yrs. | 115 | 39 | 3.4986 |
| 6-10 yrs | 59 | 21 | 3.4633 |
| 11+ yrs. | 118 | 40 | 3.4859 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.4863 |

The length of tenure (experience) as a superintendent was not a significant factor (.9658) in how superintendents perceived student access to current and useful trade books. There was no significant difference among those superintendents who had 0-5 years (mean = 3.4986), 6-10

years (mean = 3.4633), or 11 + years (mean = 3.4859) of experience as a superintendent. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.4863 (some priority).

Table 4.19

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Teachers as Role Models

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | .6638 | .3319 | .5546 | .5749 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 172.9568 | .5985 | | |
| Total | 291 | 173.6206 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-5 yrs. | 115 | 39 | 3.8696 |
| 6-10 yrs | 59 | 21 | 3.7401 |
| 11+ yrs. | 118 | 40 | 3.8136 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.8208 |

The length of tenure (experience) as a superintendent was not a significant factor (.5749) in how superintendents perceived teachers as role models. There was no significant difference among those superintendents who had 0-5 years (mean = 3.8696), 6-10 years (mean = 3.7401), or 11 + years (mean = 3.8136) of experience as a superintendent. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.8208 (some priority).

Table 4.20

One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Appropriate Professional Development for Staff

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 7.0828 | 3.5414 | 5.9391 | .0030* |
| Within Groups | 289 | 172.3252 | .5963 | | |
| Total | 291 | 179.4079 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-5 yrs. | 115 | 39 | 3.9536* |
| 6-10 yrs | 59 | 21 | 3.5819 |
| 11+ yrs. | 118 | 40 | 3.6723 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.7648 |

* significant at the .05 level

The length of tenure (experience) as a superintendent was a significant factor (.0030) in how superintendents perceived appropriate professional development for staff. Those superintendents who had 0-5 years (mean = 3.9536) of experience as a superintendent perceived appropriate professional development for staff as significantly more important than superintendents who had either 6-10 years (mean = 3.5819) or 11 + years (mean = 3.6723) of experience as a superintendent. There was no significant difference between superintendents who had 6-10 years and 11 + years of

experience as a superintendent. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.7648 (some priority).

Table 4.21

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Daily Time for Students to Become Proficient Readers

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 2.7522 | 1.3761 | 1.9984 | .1374 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 199.0013 | .6806 | | |
| Total | 291 | 201.7534 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-5 yrs. | 115 | 39 | 3.7768 |
| 6-10 yrs | 59 | 21 | 3.5141 |
| 11+ yrs. | 118 | 40 | 3.6582 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.6758 |

The length of tenure (experience) as a superintendent was not a significant factor (.1374) in how superintendents perceived daily time for students to become proficient readers. There was no significant difference among those superintendents who had 0-5 years (mean = 3.7768), 6-10 years (mean = 3.5141), or 11 + years (mean = 3.6582) of experience as a superintendent. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.6758 (some priority).

Table 4.22

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Daily Time for Students to Become Voluntary Readers

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 2.0381 | 1.0191 | 1.3962 | .2492 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 210.9402 | .7299 | | |
| Total | 291 | 212.9783 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-5 yrs. | 115 | 39 | 3.3826 |
| 6-10 yrs | 59 | 21 | 3.1582 |
| 11+ yrs. | 118 | 40 | 3.2740 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.2934 |

The length of tenure (experience) as a superintendent was not a significant factor (.2492) in how superintendents perceived daily time for students to become voluntary readers. There was no significant difference among those superintendents who had 0-5 years (mean = 3.3826), 6-10 years (mean = 3.1582), or 11 + years (mean = 3.2740) of experience as a superintendent. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.2934 (some priority).

Table 4.23

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Special Assistance for Students Reading Below Grade Level

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 1.1038 | .5519 | 1.2160 | .2979 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 131.1747 | .4539 | | |
| Total | 291 | 132.2785 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-5 yrs. | 115 | 39 | 4.2522 |
| 6-10 yrs | 59 | 21 | 4.0960 |
| 11+ yrs. | 118 | 40 | 4.1525 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 4.1804 |

The length of tenure (experience) as a superintendent was not a significant factor (.2979) in how superintendents perceived special assistance for students reading below grade level. There was no significant difference among those superintendents who had 0-5 years (mean = 4.2522), 6-10 years (mean = 4.0960), or 11 + years (mean = 4.1525) of experience as a superintendent. The mean perception of all superintendents was 4.1804 (considerable priority).

Table 4.24

One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Providing School Libraries that Attract Students and Teachers

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 3.3679 | 1.6840 | 3.7271 | .0252* |
| Within Groups | 289 | 130.5742 | .4518 | | |
| Total | 291 | 133.9422 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-5 yrs. | 115 | 39 | 4.3652* |
| 6-10 yrs | 59 | 21 | 4.1695 |
| 11+ yrs. | 118 | 40 | 4.1356 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 4.2329 |

* significant at the .05 level

The length of tenure (experience) as a superintendent was a significant factor (.0252) in how superintendents perceived providing school libraries that attract students and teachers. Those superintendents who had 0-5 years (mean = 4.3652) of experience as a superintendent perceived providing school libraries that attract students and teachers as significantly more important than superintendents who had either 6-10 years (mean = 4.1695) or 11 + years (mean = 4.1356) of experience as a superintendent. There was no significant difference between

superintendents who had 6-10 years and 11 + years of experience as a superintendent. The mean perception of all superintendents was 4.2329 (considerable priority).

Table 4.25

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Providing a Close and Useful Relationship with the Public Library

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 1.1888 | .5944 | 1.3544 | .2597 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 126.8367 | .4389 | | |
| Total | 291 | 128.0255 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-5 yrs. | 115 | 39 | 3.9188 |
| 6-10 yrs | 59 | 21 | 3.8644 |
| 11+ yrs. | 118 | 40 | 3.7768 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.8505 |

The length of tenure (experience) as a superintendent was not a significant factor (.2597) in how superintendents perceived providing a close and useful relationship with the public library. There was no significant difference among those superintendents who had 0-5 years (mean = 3.9188), 6-10 years (mean = 3.8644), or 11 + years (mean = 3.7768) of experience as a superintendent. The mean perception of all

superintendents was 3.8505 (some priority).

Table 4.26

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Encouraging Parents to Support Reading

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 1.8633 | .9317 | 1.4933 | .2263 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 180.3026 | .6239 | | |
| Total | 291 | 182.1659 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-5 yrs. | 115 | 39 | 3.8870 |
| 6-10 yrs | 59 | 21 | 3.6780 |
| 11+ yrs. | 118 | 40 | 3.7684 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.7968 |

The length of tenure (experience) as a superintendent was not a significant factor (.2263) in how superintendents perceived encouraging parents to support reading. There was no significant difference among those superintendents who had 0-5 years (mean = 3.8870), 6-10 years (mean = 3.6780), or 11 + years (mean = 3.7684) of experience as a superintendent. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.7968 (some priority).

Table 4.27

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Superintendents' Length of Tenure as a Superintendent and Their Perception of Providing an Environment Where Reading is Encouraged and Supported

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 1.1906 | .5953 | 1.2171 | .2976 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 141.3513 | .4891 | | |
| Total | 291 | 142.5419 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-5 yrs. | 115 | 39 | 4.2493 |
| 6-10 yrs | 59 | 21 | 4.1582 |
| 11+ yrs. | 118 | 40 | 4.1073 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 4.1735 |

The length of tenure (experience) as a superintendent was not a significant factor (.2976) in how superintendents perceived providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported. There was no significant difference among those superintendents who had 0-5 years (mean = 4.2493), 6-10 years (mean = 4.1582), or 11 + years (mean = 4.1073) of experience as a superintendent. The mean perception of all superintendents was 4.1735 (considerable priority).

Table 4.28

One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of the Importance of Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 3.6685 | 1.8343 | 7.3377 | .0008* |
| Within Groups | 289 | 72.2431 | .2500 | | |
| Total | 291 | 75.9116 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-1 courses | 155 | 53 | 3.9716 |
| 2-4 courses | 74 | 25 | 4.1486* |
| 5+ courses | 63 | 22 | 4.2349* |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 4.0733 |

* significant at the .05 level

The number of college reading courses completed by superintendents was a significant (.0008) factor in how superintendents perceived the importance of selected issues related to middle-grades reading. Those superintendents who had completed 0-1 (mean = 3.9716) college reading courses perceived reading issues as significantly less important than either superintendents who had completed 2-4 (mean = 4.1486) or 5 + (mean = 4.2349) college reading courses. There was no significant difference between superintendents

who completed 2-4 or 5+ college reading courses. The mean perception of all superintendents was 4.0733 (considerable priority).

Table 4.29

One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of the Practices of the School Corporation Regarding Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 5.2133 | 2.6066 | 8.3289 | .0003* |
| Within Groups | 289 | 90.4463 | .3130 | | |
| Total | 291 | 95.6596 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-1 courses | 155 | 53 | 3.7703 |
| 2-4 courses | 74 | 25 | 3.9446* |
| 5+ courses | 63 | 22 | 4.1000* |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.8856 |

* significant at the .05 level

The number of college reading courses completed by superintendents was a significant (.0003) factor in how superintendents perceived the practices of their school corporations regarding selected issues related to middle-grades reading. Those superintendents who had completed 0-1 (mean = 3.7703) college reading courses perceived reading

issues as significantly less important than either superintendents who had completed 2-4 (mean = 3.9446) or 5 + (mean = 4.1000) college reading courses. There was no significant difference between superintendents who completed 2-4 or 5+ college reading courses. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.8856 (some priority).

Table 4.30

One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of the Superintendent's Role Regarding Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 5.1669 | 2.5834 | 4.9386 | .0078* |
| Within Groups | 289 | 151.1801 | .5231 | | |
| Total | 291 | 156.3470 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-1 courses | 155 | 53 | 3.4000 |
| 2-4 courses | 74 | 25 | 3.6365* |
| 5+ courses | 63 | 22 | 3.6952* |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.5236 |

* significant at the .05 level

The number of college reading courses completed by superintendents was a significant (.0078) factor in how superintendents perceived their role regarding selected

issues related to middle-grades reading. Those superintendents who had completed 0-1 (mean = 3.4000) college reading courses perceived reading issues as significantly less important than either superintendents who had completed 2-4 (mean = 3.6365) or 5 + (mean = 3.6952) college reading courses. There was no significant difference between superintendents who completed 2-4 or 5+ college reading courses. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.5236 (some priority).

Table 4.31

One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Students' Access to Current and Useful Trade Books

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 11.0026 | 5.5013 | 8.3313 | .0003* |
| Within Groups | 289 | 190.8314 | .6603 | | |
| Total | 291 | 201.8341 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-1 courses | 155 | 53 | 3.3054 |
| 2-4 courses | 74 | 25 | 3.7252* |
| 5+ courses | 63 | 22 | 3.6508* |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.4863 |

* significant at the .05 level

The number of college reading courses completed by

superintendents was a significant (.0003) factor in how superintendents perceived student access to current and useful trade books. Those superintendents who had completed 0-1 (mean = 3.3054) college reading courses perceived student access to current and useful trade books as significantly less important than either superintendents who had completed 2-4 (mean = 3.7252) or 5 + (mean = 3.6508) college reading courses. There was no significant difference between superintendents who completed 2-4 or 5+ college reading courses. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.4863 (some priority).

Table 4.32

One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Teachers as Role Models

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 4.9415 | 2.4707 | 4.2331 | .0154* |
| Within Groups | 289 | 168.6792 | .5837 | | |
| Total | 291 | 173.6206 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-1 courses | 155 | 53 | 3.7032 |
| 2-4 courses | 74 | 25 | 3.9054 |
| 5+ courses | 63 | 22 | 4.0106* |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.8208 |

* significant at the .05 level

The number of college reading courses completed by superintendents was a significant (.0154) factor in how superintendents perceived teachers as role models. Those superintendents who had completed 0-1 (mean = 3.7032) or 2-4 (mean = 3.9054) college reading courses perceived teachers as role models as significantly less important than superintendents who had completed 5 + (mean = 4.0106) college reading courses. There was no significant difference between superintendents who completed 0-1 or 2-4 college reading courses. The mean perception of the superintendents was 3.8208 (some priority).

Table 4.33

One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Appropriate Professional Development for Staff

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 8.0906 | 4.0453 | 6.8242 | .0013* |
| Within Groups | 289 | 171.3173 | .5928 | | |
| Total | 291 | 179.4079 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-1 courses | 155 | 53 | 3.6151 |
| 2-4 courses | 74 | 25 | 3.8694* |
| 5+ courses | 63 | 22 | 4.0106* |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.7648 |

* significant at the .05 level

The number of college reading courses completed by superintendents was a significant (.0013) factor in how superintendents perceived appropriate professional development for staff. Those superintendents who had completed 0-1 (mean = 3.6151) college reading courses perceived appropriate development for staff as significantly less important than superintendents who had completed 2-4 (mean = 3.8694) or 5 + (mean = 4.0106) college reading courses. There was no significant difference between superintendents who completed 2-4 or 5+ college reading courses. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.7648 (some priority).

Table 4.34

One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Daily Time for Students to Become Proficient Readers

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 11.4731 | 5.7365 | 8.7127 | .0002* |
| Within Groups | 289 | 190.2804 | .6584 | | |
| Total | 291 | 201.7534 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-1 courses | 155 | 53 | 3.5032 |
| 2-4 courses | 74 | 25 | 3.7703* |
| 5+ courses | 63 | 22 | 3.9894* |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.6758 |

* significant at the .05 level

The number of college reading courses completed by superintendents was a significant (.0002) factor in how superintendents perceived daily time for students to become proficient readers. Those superintendents who had completed 0-1 (mean = 3.5032) college reading courses perceived daily time for students to become proficient readers as significantly less important than either superintendents who had completed 2-4 (mean = 3.7703) or 5 + (mean = 3.9894) college reading courses. There was no significant difference between superintendents who completed 2-4 or 5+ college reading courses. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.6758 (some priority).

Table 4.35

One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Daily Time for Students to Become Voluntary Readers

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 5.2864 | 2.6432 | 3.6780 | .0265* |
| Within Groups | 289 | 207.6919 | .7187 | | |
| Total | 291 | 212.9783 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-1 courses | 155 | 53 | 3.1677 |
| 2-4 courses | 74 | 25 | 3.4144* |
| 5+ courses | 63 | 22 | 3.4603* |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.2934 |

* significant at the .05 level

The number of college reading courses completed by superintendents was a significant (.0265) factor in how superintendents perceived daily time for students to become voluntary readers. Those superintendents who had completed 0-1 (mean = 3.1677) college reading courses perceived daily time for students to become voluntary readers as significantly less important than superintendents who had completed 2-4 (mean = 3.4144) or 5 + (mean = 3.4603) college reading courses. There was no significant difference between superintendents who completed 2-4 or 5+ college reading courses. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.2934 (some priority).

Table 4.36

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Special Assistance for Students Reading Below Grade Level

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 1.9664 | .9832 | 2.1805 | .1148 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 130.3121 | .4509 | | |
| Total | 291 | 132.2785 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-1 courses | 155 | 53 | 4.1032 |
| 2-4 courses | 74 | 25 | 4.2658 |
| 5+ courses | 63 | 22 | 4.2698 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 4.1804 |

The number of college reading courses completed by superintendents was not a significant (.1148) factor in how superintendents perceived special assistance for students reading below grade level. There was no significant difference among those superintendents who completed 0-1 (mean = 4.1032), 2-4 (mean = 4.2658), or 5+ (mean = 4.2698) college reading courses. The mean perception of all superintendents was 4.1804 (considerable priority).

Table 4.37

One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Providing School Libraries that Attract Students and Teachers

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 2.6671 | 1.3335 | 2.9358 | .0547 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 131.2751 | .4542 | | |
| Total | 291 | 133.9422 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-1 courses | 155 | 53 | 4.1634 |
| 2-4 courses | 74 | 25 | 4.2297 |
| 5+ courses | 63 | 22 | 4.4074* |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 4.2329 |

* significant at the .05 level by virtue of the Duncan Multiple Range Test, but may be considered to be due to chance.

The number of college reading courses completed by

superintendents was not a significant (.0547) factor in how superintendents perceived providing school libraries that attract students and teachers. However, those superintendents who had completed 0-1 (mean = 4.1634) or 2-4 (mean = 4.2297) college reading courses perceived providing school libraries that attract students and teachers as significantly less important than superintendents who had completed 5 + (mean = 4.4074) college reading courses. There was no significant difference among those superintendents who completed 0-1 or 2-4 college reading courses. The mean perception of all superintendents was 4.2329 (considerable priority).

Table 4.38

One-way Analysis of Variance Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Providing a Close and Useful Relationship with the Public Library

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 1.5595 | .7797 | 1.7818 | .1702 |
| Within Groups | 289 | 126.4660 | .4376 | | |
| Total | 291 | 128.0255 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-1 courses | 155 | 53 | 3.7828 |
| 2-4 courses | 74 | 25 | 3.9099 |
| 5+ courses | 63 | 22 | 3.9471 |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.8505 |

The number of college reading courses completed by superintendents was not a significant (.1702) factor in how superintendents perceived providing a close and useful relationship with the public library. There was no significant difference among those superintendents who completed 0-1 (mean = 3.7828), 2-4 (mean = 3.9099), or 5+ (mean = 3.9471) college reading courses. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.8505 (some priority).

Table 4.39

One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Encouraging Parents to Support Reading

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 4.3400 | 2.1700 | 3.5266 | .0307* |
| Within Groups | 289 | 177.8259 | .6153 | | |
| Total | 291 | 182.1659 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-1 courses | 155 | 53 | 3.6925 |
| 2-4 courses | 74 | 25 | 3.8468 |
| 5+ courses | 63 | 22 | 3.9947* |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 3.7968 |

* significant at the .05 level

The number of college reading courses completed by superintendents was a significant (.0307) factor in how

superintendents perceived encouraging parents to support reading. Those superintendents who had completed 0-1 (mean = 3.6925) or 2-4 (mean = 3.8468) college reading courses perceived encouraging parents to support reading as significantly less important than superintendents who had completed 5 + (mean = 3.9947) college reading courses. There was no significant difference among those superintendents who completed 0-1 or 2-4 college reading courses. The mean perception of all superintendents was 3.7968 (some priority).

Table 4.40

One-way Analysis of Variance and the Duncan's Analysis of Means Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Superintendents and Their Perception of Providing an Environment Where Reading is Encouraged and Supported

| Source | D.F. | Sum of Squares | Mean Squares | F Ratio | F Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 2.9613 | 1.4806 | 3.0657 | .0481* |
| Within Groups | 289 | 139.5806 | .4830 | | |
| Total | 291 | 142.5419 | | | |

| Group | Count | Percent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-1 courses | 155 | 53 | 4.1032 |
| 2-4 courses | 74 | 25 | 4.1622 |
| 5+ courses | 63 | 22 | 4.3598* |
| Total | 292 | 100 | 4.1735 |

* significant at the .05 level

The number of college reading courses completed by superintendents was a significant (.0481) factor in how superintendents perceived providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported. Those superintendents who had completed 0-1 (mean = 4.1032) or 2-4 (mean = 4.1622) college reading courses perceived providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported as significantly less important than superintendents who had completed 5 + (mean = 4.3598) college reading courses. There was no significant difference among those superintendents who completed 0-1 or 2-4 college reading courses. The mean perception of all superintendents was 4.1735 (some priority).

Table 4.41

F-Value and Means Summary of the Size of Indiana School Corporations, Tenure (Experience) as a Superintendent, and Number of College Reading Courses Completed by Indiana Superintendents as Compared to Ten Selected Reading Issues in Middle-Grades Schools and the Superintendent's Perception of the Importance of the Issues, the Superintendent's School Corporation Practices Aimed at the Issues, and the Superintendent's Perception of His/Her Specific Role Regarding the Selected Issues

| | Size | | Experience | | Courses | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | Means | F | Means | F | Means |
| CATEGORIES: | | | | | | |
| Importance | .9301 | 4.0733 | .1072 | 4.0733 | .0008* | 4.0733 |
| Practice | .8967 | 3.8856 | .2754 | 3.8856 | .0003* | 3.8856 |
| Superintendent's Role | .7512 | 3.5236 | .0606 | 3.5236 | .0078* | 3.5236 |

| | Size | | Experience | | Courses | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | Means | F | Means | F | Means |
| ISSUES: | | | | | | |
| 1. Student Access to Current and Useful Trade Books | .7511 | 3.4863 | .9658 | 3.4863 | .0003* | 3.4863 |
| 2. Teachers as Role Models | .4142 | 3.8208 | .5749 | 3.8208 | .0154* | 3.8208 |
| 3. Appropriate Professional Development for Staff | .6069 | 3.7648 | .0030* | 3.7648 | .0013* | 3.7648 |
| 4. Daily Time for Students to Become Proficient Readers | .4598 | 3.6758 | .1374 | 3.6758 | .0002* | 3.6758 |
| 5. Daily Time for Students to Become Voluntary Readers | .4909 | 3.2934 | .2492 | 3.2934 | .0265* | 3.2934 |
| 6. Special Assistance for Students Reading Below Grade Level | .7613 | 4.1804 | .2979 | 4.1804 | .1148 | 4.1804 |
| 7. Providing School Libraries that Attract Students and Teachers | .7252 | 4.2329 | .0252* | 4.2329 | .0547 | 4.2329 |
| 8. Providing a Close and useful Relationship with the Public Library | .9395 | 3.8505 | .2597 | 3.8505 | .1702 | 3.8505 |
| 9. Encouraging Parents to Support Reading | .5254 | 3.7968 | .2263 | 3.7968 | .0307* | 3.7968 |
| 10. Providing an Environment Where Reading is Encouraged and Supported | .8959 | 4.1735 | .2976 | 4.1735 | .0481* | 4.1735 |

* significant at the .05 level

Likert Scale categories for means:

0 = no priority at all
1 = almost no priority
2 = very little priority
3 = some priority
4 = considerable priority
5 = a top priority

Table 4.42

Calculated Mean Summary of Individual Survey Items Regarding the Superintendents' Perception of the Importance of Each Survey Item, the Practices of the School Corporation, and the Superintendents' Role with Regard to Each of the Ten Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading

| | Importance (Survey Item #) | Practices (Survey Item #) | Role (Survey Item #) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Student Access to Current and Useful Trade Books | 3.6370 (#1) | 3.5308 (#2) | 3.2911 (#3) |
| 2. Teachers as Role Models | 4.1815 (#4) | 3.7329 (#5) | 3.5479 (#6) |
| 3. Appropriate Professional Development for Staff | 3.8356 (#7) | 3.7568 (#8) | 3.7020 (#9) |
| 4. Daily Time for Students to Become Proficient Readers | 3.9863 (#10) | 3.5890 (#11) | 3.4521 (#12) |
| 5. Daily Time for Students to Become Voluntary Readers | 3.2911 (#13) | 3.4589 (#14) | 3.1301(#15) |
| 6. Special Assistance for Students Reading Below Grade Level | 4.5582 (#16) | 4.1267 (#17) | 3.8562 (#18) |
| 7. Providing School Libraries that Attract Students and Teachers | 4.5582 (#19) | 4.0342 (#20) | 4.1062 (#21) |
| 8. Providing a Close and Useful Relationship with the Public Library | 4.1062 (#22) | 4.3596 (#23) | 3.0856 (#24) |
| 9. Encouraging Parents to Support Reading | 4.1301 (#25) | 3.9760 (#26) | 3.2842 (#27) |
| 10. Providing an Environment Where Reading is Encouraged and Supported | 4.4486 (#28) | 4.2911 (#29) | 3.7808 (#30) |
| TOTAL MEAN | 4.0733 | 3.8856 | 3.5236 |

Likert Scale categories for means:

0 = no priority at all
1 = almost no priority
2 = very little priority
3 = some priority
4 = considerable priority
5 = a top priority

Table 4.43

Summary of Individual Survey Items Regarding the Superintendents' Perception of the Importance of Each Survey Item, the Practices of the School Corporation, and the Superintendents' Role with Regard to Each of the Ten Selected Issues Related to Middle-Grades Reading

| | Importance (Survey Item #) | Practices (Survey Item #) | Role (Survey Item #) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Student Access to Current and Useful Trade Books | Some Priority (#1) | Some Priority (#2) | Some Priority (#3) |
| 2. Teachers as Role Models | Considerable Priority (#4) | Some Priority (#5) | Some Priority (#6) |
| 3. Appropriate Professional Development for Staff | Some Priority (#7) | Some Priority (#8) | Some Priority (#9) |
| 4. Daily Time for Students to Become Proficient Readers | Some Priority (#10) | Some Priority (#11) | Some Priority (#12) |
| 5. Daily Time for Students to Become Voluntary Readers | Some Priority (#13) | Some Priority (#14) | Some Priority (#15) |
| 6. Special Assistance for Students Reading Below Grade Level | Considerable Priority (#16) | Considerable Priority (#17) | Some Priority (#18) |
| 7. Providing School Libraries that Attract Students and Teachers | Considerable Priority (#19) | Considerable Priority (#20) | Considerable Priority (#21) |
| 8. Providing a Close and Useful Relationship with the Public Library | Considerable Priority (#22) | Considerable Priority (#23) | Some Priority (#24) |
| 9. Encouraging Parents to Support Reading | Considerable Priority (#25) | Some Priority (#26) | Some Priority (#27) |
| 10. Providing an Environment Where Reading is Encouraged and Supported | Considerable Priority (#28) | Considerable Priority (#29) | Some Priority (#30) |

Table 4.44

Rank of Superintendents' Perceptions Regarding Middle-Grades Reading Issues

| | Importance | Practices | Role |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Student Access to Current and Useful Trade Books | 9 | 9 | 7 |
| 2. Teachers as Role Models | 4 | 7 | 5 |
| 3. Appropriate Professional Development for Staff | 8 | 6 | 4 |
| 4. Daily Time for Students to Become Proficient Readers | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| 5. Daily Time for Students to Become Voluntary Readers | 10 | 10 | 9 |
| 6. Special Assistance for Students Reading Below Grade Level | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| 7. Providing School Libraries that Attract Students and Teachers | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| 8. Providing a Close and Useful Relationship with the Public Library | 6 | 1 | 10 |
| 9. Encouraging Parents to Support Reading | 5 | 5 | 8 |
| 10. Providing an Environment Where Reading is Encouraged and Supported | 3 | 2 | 3 |

The summary, conclusions, and recommendations related to the findings of this study are found in Chapter 5.

# Chapter 5

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of Indiana Public School Superintendents regarding their role in influencing the development of a community of readers in Indiana middle-grades schools. This final chapter provides a summary based on the data and findings as detailed in Chapter 4. From these data and findings, certain conclusions are presented followed by a discussion of additional findings. Finally, recommendations are offered for further studies and research.

### Summary

The survey instrument was sent to 297 school superintendents. A total of 292 superintendents replied to the survey instrument for a return rate of 98 percent. There were 30 items on the survey designed to provide the data to answer the research question that was as follows:

Is there a significant difference due to: (A) School corporation size; (B) Tenure (experience) as a superintendent; or (C) Number of college reading courses completed by superintendents that affect Indiana Public

School Superintendents' perceptions of the category of importance of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, the category of school corporations' practices concerned with the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, or the category of the superintendents' perception of their role regarding the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, nor upon the Indiana superintendents' perceptions of each of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading which are: 1. student access to current and useful trade books; 2. teachers as role models; 3. appropriate professional development for staff; 4. daily time for students to become proficient readers; 5. daily time for students to become voluntary readers; 6. special assistance for students reading below grade level; 7. providing school libraries that attract students and teachers; 8. providing a close and useful relationship with the public library; 9. encouraging parents to support reading; and 10. providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported?

Survey items were rated by the 292 superintendents on a Likert-type scale used to indicate priorities by recording the following defined scores: 0 infers no priority at all, 1 infers almost no priority, 2 infers very little priority, 3 infers some priority, 4 infers considerable priority, and 5 infers top priority. The Indiana State University Computer Center was utilized to analyze the data. The one-

way analysis of variance using a .05 level of significance was used to examine the statistical significance of the responses on the three independent variables as to school corporation size, tenure (experience) as a superintendent, and the number of university course studies completed by the superintendent in reading instruction. Individual means were analyzed by virtue of the Duncan Multiple Range Test when the ANOVA was significant at the .05 level. Statistical analysis indicates that throughout the study, the between groups degrees of freedom was two and the within groups degrees of freedom was 289. The critical value of F was determined to be 3.04.

The null hypothesis ($H_1$) derived from the research question and the findings are as follows: (A) There is no significant difference among small, medium, and large school corporations and the superintendents' perceptions of the category of the importance of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, the category of school corporations' practices concerned with the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, or the category of the superintendents' perception of their role regarding the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, nor upon the Indiana superintendents' perceptions of each of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading which are: 1. student access to current and useful trade books; 2. teachers as role models; 3. appropriate professional development for staff; 4. daily time for students to become

proficient readers; 5. daily time for students to become voluntary readers; 6. special assistance for students reading below grade level; 7. providing school libraries that attract students and teachers; 8. providing a close and useful relationship with the public library; 9. encouraging parents to support reading; and 10. providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported. Therefore, all of part A of the null hypothesis was accepted at the .05 level of significance.

(B) There is no significant difference among the tenure (experience) as a superintendent and the superintendents' perceptions of the category of importance of ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, the category of the school corporations' practices concerned with the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, or the category of the superintendents' perception of their role regarding the specific issues related to middle-grades reading, nor upon the Indiana superintendents' perceptions of the ten specific issues of: 1. student access to current and useful trade books; 2. teachers as role models; 4. daily time for students to become proficient readers; 5. daily time for students to become voluntary readers; 6. special assistance for students reading below grade level; 8. providing a close and useful relationship with the public library; 9. encouraging parents to support reading; and 10. providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported. These aspects of part B of the

null hypothesis were accepted at the .05 level of significance.

It was interesting to note, however, that superintendents who had 0-5 years of experience as a superintendent felt that appropriate professional development for staff (issue three) and providing school libraries that attract students and teachers (issue seven) were significantly important issues related to middle-grades reading. Therefore, issues three and seven within part B of the null hypothesis were rejected at the .05 level of significance.

(C) There is a significant difference among the number of college reading courses completed by superintendents and the superintendents' perceptions of the category of importance of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, the category of the school corporations' practices concerned with the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, the category of the superintendents' perception of their role regarding the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading, and the Indiana superintendents' perceptions of the specific issues of: 1. student access to current and useful trade books; 2. teachers as role models; 3. appropriate professional development for staff; 4. daily time for students to become proficient readers; 5. daily time for students to become voluntary readers; 9. encouraging parents to support reading; and 10. providing an environment where reading is

encouraged and supported. These aspects of part C of the null hypothesis were rejected at the .05 level of significance.

The findings further suggest that issues: 6. special assistance for students reading below grade level; 7. providing school libraries that attract students and teachers; and 8. providing a close and useful relationship with the public library were not statistically significant. Therefore, issues six, seven, and eight of part C of the null hypothesis were accepted at the .05 level of significance.

## Conclusions

Based on the findings reported in Chapter 4, the following conclusions are warranted and are supported by data presented in Tables 4.41, 4.42, and 4.43.

1. The size of Indiana school corporations did not make a difference in how superintendents felt about the importance of reading, the practices employed in their school corporations, or their role regarding ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading.

2. The size of Indiana school corporations did not make a difference as to how superintendents felt about each of the ten issues related to middle-grades reading.

3. The length of tenure (experience) as a superintendent did not affect how superintendents felt about the importance of reading, the practices employed in their school corporations, or their role regarding the ten

specific issues related to middle-grades reading.

4. Superintendents who have had 0-5 years of experience as a superintendent had a significantly higher regard (mean) for appropriate professional development for staff (issue three) and providing school libraries that attract students and teachers (issue seven) than did superintendents who had more than five years of experience as a superintendent.

5. The number of college reading courses completed by superintendents did make a significant difference in how superintendents regarded the importance of reading, the practices employed in their school corporations, and their role regarding the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading.

6. Special assistance for students reading below grade level (issue six), providing school libraries that attract students and teachers (issue seven), and providing a close and useful relationship with the public library (issue eight) were not significant when comparing the number of college reading courses completed by superintendents. There was a significant difference dependent upon the number of college reading courses completed by superintendents and their perceptions of the other seven issues.

## Discussion

Although the above conclusions relate to a distinct statistical significance or lack thereof, we shall see in this section that the lack of significance does not

necessarily mean a lack of importance or priority.

1. Superintendents commonly held the perception that providing school libraries that attract students and teachers was a vital factor related to reading in their middle-grades schools. However, in their ranking of the ten selected issues they did not seem to directly connect library book collections (issue one - student access to current and useful trade books) with good school libraries or providing daily time for students to become voluntary readers (issue five). As related in Chapter 2 (pp. 39-41), research consistently indicates a high correlation between student access to current and useful trade books and ample time for students to become voluntary readers, and higher achievement scores.

2. Superintendents felt that the importance of teachers as role models (issue two) should be given considerable priority. However, they did not give as much priority to either the practices that occur in their school corporations or their role regarding ensuring that teachers are role models in their middle-grades schools.

3. Superintendents ranked the importance of special assistance for students reading below grade level (issue six) as having considerable priority and also ranked the practices in their schools as meeting this need with considerable priority. It is interesting to note that they ranked their role as having only some priority in providing this service. However, it should be remembered that over

one-third of Indiana middle-grades students who have fallen behind one or more grade levels in reading receive no special assistance as related in Chapter 1 (p. 1) and Chapter 2 (pp. 63, 65) of this study.

4. Superintendents ranked that providing a close and useful relationship with the public library (issue eight) was important to reading success and gave their schools top ranking in practicing this concept. Notably, they ranked their role in this relationship as the lowest of the ten selected issues. However, Chapter 2 (pp. 72-75) of this study indicates that improvements need to be made regarding student participation at public libraries, and communication between public and school librarians needs to be enhanced. Obviously, perceptions of Indiana superintendents differ with the reports from related literature and research.

5. Encouraging parents to support reading (issue nine) was of considerable importance to superintendents. Generally, superintendents perceived that their schools are adequately meeting this need. Superintendents ranked the priority of their role as only eighth among the ten selected issues.

6. Superintendents commonly felt that providing an environment where reading is encouraged and supported (issue ten) should be given considerable priority in their middle-grades schools. They felt that this is being accomplished and that their role regarding this issue was of some priority.

7. In totality, superintendents perceived that reading in Indiana's middle-grades schools was important (considerable priority) to them. Further, superintendents did report that the reading practices employed in their middle-grades schools were satisfactory (some priority), and that their direct involvement regarding the ten selected issues did not have as much priority (some priority) as other areas of concern to them, such as budgets and bargaining as related in Chapter 2 (pp. 33-36) of this study.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the review of literature and statistical findings of this study:

1. Studies should be done to show what percentage of superintendents have a building administrative and/or teaching background in elementary, middle school, and secondary education as compared to their ranking of the categories of importance, practices, superintendent's role, and each of the ten specific issues related to middle-grades reading.

2. Further research should be conducted to determine why superintendents rank providing school libraries that attract students and teachers (issue seven) as their highest priority with regard to each of the ten specific issues; and yet, the related issues of student access to current and useful trade books (issue one) and daily time for students to become voluntary readers (issue four) are rated as their

lowest priorities.

3. Further studies need to be done to examine exactly what superintendents consider as their most important roles and where that role importance ranks in relation to their school corporations' overall reading and academic effectiveness as determined by the selected criteria for effective schools.

4. Studies and related literature indicate that middle-grades schools, overall, are not providing the critical elements for reading success as indicated in Chapter 1 (pp. 1, 2) and Chapter 2 (pp. 34-83) of this study. Superintendents do not see their role as a considerable priority in these efforts, even though they consider middle-grades reading to be important. Research needs to be conducted to find out why there is this discrepancy between what is thought to be important and what is actually being practiced in their schools. Further, research needs to be conducted to find out why there is a discrepancy between what is thought to be important regarding middle-grades reading and the superintendents' role regarding middle-grades reading.

5. This study could be replicated in other states to formulate a comparison with the Indiana study.

6. Superintendents should be provided with more facts about the critical elements of reading success and inservice training related to the importance of their role and their underlying influence on staff, students, parents, and

community regarding reading in their middle-grades schools.

7. Superintendents who have had more university courses in reading perceive their tasks related to middle-grades reading to be more vital. This consistently significant finding suggests that middle-grades reading would receive increased priority if superintendents obtained more personal academic knowledge about reading education.

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## Appendix A

## Middle Grades Reading Network

| | |
|---|---|
| Richard C. Anderson | University of Illinois |
| Leah Lefstein Austin | W. K. Kellogg Foundation |
| Eileen Baker | Richmond Community Schools |
| Cathy Barlow | University of Evansville |
| Linda Cornwell | Indiana Department of Education |
| Judith Davidson | University of Illinois |
| Tony Eichelberger | University of Pittsburgh |
| John T. McGovern | Cabrini College |
| Norman Newberg | University of Pennsylvania |
| Kenneth R. Romines | San Francisco Public Schools |
| Judith Zorfass | Education Development Center |

Director

Jack W. Humphrey

## Appendix B

## Survey Validation Letter

November 10, 1993

Dear

Per our recent telephone conversation, I am requesting your professional expertise and assistance, as a highly regarded educator in the field of reading, to develop a survey regarding the superintendent's role in developing a community of readers. The following issues are addressed:

1. The role of Indiana superintendents in ensuring that middle-grades students have access to current and useful trade books (survey items 1, 2, 3);

2. The role of Indiana superintendents in ensuring that adults, including middle-grades teachers, are good reading role models for students (survey items 4, 5, 6);

3. The role of Indiana superintendents in ensuring middle-grades reading (including reading in the content areas) teachers receive appropriate professional development training (survey items 7, 8, 9);

4. The role of Indiana superintendents in ensuring that there is daily time in the school day for middle-grades students to become proficient readers (survey items 10, 11, 12);

5. The role of Indiana superintendents in ensuring that there is daily time in the school day for middle-grades students to become voluntary readers (survey items 13, 14, 15);

6. The role of Indiana superintendents in ensuring that those middle-grades students whose reading proficiency is below that needed to understand the written materials used in their classrooms have special reading assistance (survey items 16, 17, 18);

7. The role of Indiana superintendents in ensuring that the school library media center is attracting middle-grades students and middle-grades teachers to use its books and other written materials (survey items 19, 20, 21);

8. The role of the Indiana superintendents in ensuring that middle-grades schools have a close and useful relationship with the community public library (survey items 22, 23, 24);

9. The role of the Indiana superintendents in ensuring that middle-grades schools encourage parents to provide reading support for their middle-grades children (survey items 25, 26, 27); and,

10. The role of Indiana superintendents in encouraging middle-grades schools to provide an environment where reading is encouraged and supported (survey items 28, 29, 30).

Each issue has three questions. Statement one restates the goal as to its regarded importance by the superintendent. Statement two relates an action that can be taken. Statement three relates to the superintendent's role concerning the issue.

Please feel free to edit or change any part of the survey draft as you see fit.

A draft copy of Chapter 1 of my dissertation is enclosed to provide additional information. Call me at 812-847-6020 (office) or 812-847-0091 (home) if you'd like to directly discuss the survey.

Using this information I hope to find out if superintendents should be doing more, and if so, what they feel they should be doing to improve the reading success for our children during this crucial time in their lives when reading habits are developed.

As an educator, I know how you value your time. Please accept my sincere gratitude for your time and effort in helping to develop this survey instrument. I will send you a copy of the results.

I will need your input by December 1, 1993, so that the final touches can be made before the final printing and dissemination to all Indiana public school superintendents.

A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Sincerely,

E. L. Holland, Superintendent
Doctoral Candidate
Dr. Loran Braught - Dissertation Chairman
Educational Administration
Indiana State University

ELH:mjc
Enclosure

## Appendix C

## Indiana Superintendent's Letter

Dear Superintendent,

The 1992 Lilly Endowment report, "A Study of Reading in Indiana Junior and Senior High Schools," documents that there is a weak link in the educational conduit from elementary to secondary reading programs. Facts from this report indicate that, for many middle-grades students, Indiana schools are not providing the critical elements for reading success which in summary are: 1. a vision for life-long readership; 2. adequate access to books -- whether for classroom assignments or voluntary reading; 3. providing access to excellent practice -- the very best reading instruction taught by teachers with confidence and zeal for reading; and, 4. meaningful opportunities to read and to interact with passionate readers out of school as well as in school.

My doctoral research project is designed to determine what role the superintendent should play in providing these critical elements for reading success to our students in grades six through eight. You can help by completing the enclosed survey that is being sent to all Indiana public school superintendents. All responses will be treated in a confidential manner. Individual and corporation names will not be used in the report, but are necessary for me to have in order to assign corporations to various categories.

Using this information, I hope to find out what superintendents are doing and to what degree we should be involved to cause all facets of the reading program to happen in order to improve reading success for our children during this critical time in their lives when life-long reading habits are developed.

Through my role as a superintendent, I know how you value your time. Please accept my sincere gratitude for your time and effort in completing this survey. A copy of the results will be sent to you.

Please return the completed survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope no later than February 4, 1994. If you have questions, call me at 812-847-6020.

Sincerely,

Earlene L. Holland, Superintendent
Doctoral Candidate
Dr. Loran Braught, Dissertation Chairman
Department of Education
Indiana State University

Endorsed by:

Dr. Suellen Reed
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Endorsed by:

Dr. Tracy F. Dust
Executive Director
Indiana Association of Public School
Superintendents

ELH:mjc

Enclosure

## Appendix D

### Indiana Superintendent's Follow-up Letter

January 31, 1994

Dear Superintendent:

On January 14, 1994, I mailed letters to all Indiana Superintendents in which I solicited responses to a survey that is crucial to the completion of my doctoral research project and to a report to the Superintendents' Association and the State Department. As you may remember, the subject of my project is to determine what role the superintendent should play in providing several critical elements for reading success to our students in middle-grades schools. Even if you have delegated the responsibilities as outlined in the survey, your own perceptions are vital in determining outcomes.

Of the approximately 300 surveys sent out, I have received responses from all but seventy-six (76) of the superintendents. According to my records, you have not yet responded. The deadline for the return of this survey is this Friday, February 4, 1994. Please take a moment to complete the survey (I have enclosed another copy for your convenience) and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope that was sent to you with the original survey or you may FAX it to me at: (812) 847-8659.

I would appreciate your input at your earliest possible convenience. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at: (812) 847-6020 or 847-0091.

Sincerely,

Earlene L. Holland
Superintendent
Linton-Stockton Schools
Doctoral Candidate

ELH:cdg

Encl: as stated

## Appendix E

### Indiana Superintendent's Survey of Middle-Grades Reading Priorities

A. Corporation Number _____

B. How many total years have you served as a school superintendent?
(check one) 0-5 yrs.___ 6-10 yrs.___ over 10 yrs.___

C. How many total college courses have you completed specifically related to the teaching of reading and/or literature (not English)?
(check one) 0-1___ 2-4___ over 4 courses ___

Using the scale below, please indicate, by a check (✓), your official priority regarding the following 30 questions. Priority is intended to mean the relative importance when you are officially considering budget, faculty assignment of time, inclusion in program planning, etc. The interpretations for each value are:

0 = no priority at all
1 = almost no priority
2 = very little priority
3 = some priority
4 = considerable priority
5 = a top priority

1. Students should have easy access to current and useful trade books in middle-grades classrooms and libraries (not including text books, personal literature, etc.).

   0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

2. The accepted book acquisition rate to keep middle-grades libraries current is two books per student per year. Therefore, funds should be allocated to purchase a minimum of two books per student per year.

   0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

3. The superintendent's role (as active participant or decision-maker) is of critical importance in ensuring that current and useful trade books (books other than textbooks) are accessible to middle-grades students.

   0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

4. Teachers and principals should provide good reading role models for middle-grades students by reading with, to, and in front of students.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

5. When interviewing middle-grades teachers and principals as job candidates, questions should be included concerning their reading interests and habits.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

6. The superintendent's role (as active participant or decision-maker) is of critical importance in ensuring that middle-grades teachers and principals are good reading role models for their students.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

7. Professional development in reading/literature instruction should be provided for all middle-grades teachers who use materials requiring reading.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

8. All middle-grades teachers who use materials requiring reading should have special training in teaching reading to help students understand how to read literature and subject area content materials.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

9. The superintendent's role (as active participant or decision-maker) is of critical importance in ensuring that professional development is provided to all middle-grades teachers who use materials requiring reading.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

10. There should be enough time in the school day to ensure success for all middle-grades students to become proficient readers (not including free reading time).

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

11. All middle-grades students should have a period of reading or literature, as well as an English/language arts period (or equivalent time in a block schedule), each day.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

12. The superintendent's role (as active participant or decision-maker) is of critical importance in ensuring that a period of reading or literature, as well as an English/language arts period, is provided to all students in the middle-grades.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

13. There should be daily school time (in or out of class) assured for all middle-grades students to participate in voluntary (free time) reading.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

14. Specific activities and situations such as school-wide sustained silent reading time, library reading time, and free reading time should be provided on a regular basis to all middle-grades students.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

15. The superintendent's role (as active participant or decision-maker) is of critical importance in ensuring that daily school time is provided for all middle-grades students to participate in voluntary (free time) reading.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

16. Successful middle-grades students need to be able to proficiently read written materials used in their classrooms.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

17. All middle-grades students unable to read and understand the written materials used in their classrooms should have special reading assistance provided by Chapter I or the school.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

18. The superintendent's role (as active participant or decision-maker) is of critical importance in ensuring that all middle grades students unable to read and understand the written materials used in their classrooms have special reading assistance.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

19. Each middle-grades school should have a library that attracts students to use books and other written materials.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

20. Information concerning student use of middle-grades school libraries, such as book circulation, should be accessible to all school staff members, the central office, and parents.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

21. The superintendent's role (as active participant or decision-maker) is of critical importance in ensuring that middle-grades schools have libraries that attract students to use books and other written materials.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

22. Middle-grades school librarians, principals, and reading and literature teachers should work in cooperation with public librarians to maintain an active and close relationship.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

23. Middle-grades students should be encouraged by teachers, principals, and librarians to use the public library.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

24. The superintendent's role (as active participant or decision-maker) is of critical importance in ensuring that middle-grades students use the public library.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

25. Parents should be provided with direct support to encourage middle-grades children to read more at home.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

26. Middle-grades schools should have a plan or program that encourages parents to provide reading support for their children.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

27. The superintendent's role (as active participant or decision-maker) is of critical importance in ensuring that parents of middle-grades students provide reading support for their children.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

28. Middle-grades principals, teachers, and librarians should provide an environment where reading is directly and visibly encouraged and supported.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

29. Halls, classrooms, and school libraries should reflect the importance of reading in middle-grades schools, and middle-grades principals, teachers, and librarians should provide co-curricular and extra-curricular programs (such as book clubs, guest author programs, reading incentive programs and awards, etc.).

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

30. The superintendent's role (as active participant or decision-maker) is of critical importance in ensuring that middle-grades teachers, principals, and librarians provide an environment where reading is encouraged and supported.

0____ 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____

## Appendix F

### One-way Analysis of Variance of Survey Items Regarding School Corporation Size

| Variable | Hypoth. SS | Error SS | Hypoth. MS | Error MS | F | Sig. of F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2.25492 | 281.26563 | 1.12746 | .97324 | 1.15846 | .315 |
| 2 | .10805 | 326.61455 | .05403 | 1.13015 | .04780 | .953 |
| 3 | .05720 | 332.19964 | .02860 | 1.14948 | .02488 | .975 |
| 4 | 1.29921 | 212.08093 | .64960 | .73384 | .88521 | .414 |
| 5 | 1.98314 | 307.18124 | .99157 | 1.06291 | .93288 | .395 |
| 6 | 1.09799 | 245.23078 | .54899 | .84855 | .64698 | .524 |
| 7 | .66826 | 241.44133 | .33413 | .83544 | .39995 | .671 |
| 8 | .46575 | 245.27055 | .23287 | .84869 | .27439 | .760 |
| 9 | 4.42973 | 258.64904 | 2.21487 | .89498 | 2.47477 | .086 |
| 10 | 1.11219 | 200.83301 | .55610 | .69492 | .80023 | .450 |
| 11 | 3.53077 | 315.15416 | 1.76539 | 1.09050 | 1.61888 | .200 |
| 12 | .04979 | 338.27897 | .02490 | 1.17052 | .02127 | .979 |
| 13 | 1.57481 | 286.68204 | .78740 | .99198 | .79377 | .453 |
| 14 | 1.75226 | 266.75459 | .87613 | .92303 | .94919 | .388 |
| 15 | 1.44484 | 281.60996 | .72242 | .97443 | .74138 | .477 |
| 16 | .26657 | 111.74370 | .13329 | .38666 | .34472 | .709 |
| 17 | 1.45066 | 228.86099 | .72533 | .79191 | .91593 | .401 |
| 18 | 1.04305 | 274.91585 | .52153 | .95127 | .54824 | .579 |
| 19 | .36523 | 105.64505 | .18261 | .36555 | .49955 | .607 |
| 20 | .15059 | 285.50694 | .07530 | .98791 | .07622 | .927 |
| 21 | 1.92534 | 217.78357 | .96267 | .75358 | 1.27747 | .280 |
| 22 | .42160 | 161.28730 | .21080 | .55809 | .37772 | .686 |
| 23 | .34684 | 142.89631 | .17342 | .49445 | .35073 | .704 |
| 24 | 2.27941 | 366.58018 | 1.13970 | 1.26844 | .89850 | .408 |
| 25 | 1.24603 | 209.80876 | .62302 | .72598 | .85817 | .425 |
| 26 | .46812 | 200.36407 | .23406 | .69330 | .33760 | .714 |
| 27 | 3.27419 | 320.13334 | 1.63710 | 1.10773 | 1.47789 | .230 |
| 28 | .51443 | 135.71502 | .25722 | .46960 | .54773 | .579 |
| 29 | 1.55902 | 178.69783 | .77951 | .61833 | 1.26067 | .285 |
| 30 | .66587 | 299.30673 | .33293 | 1.03566 | .32147 | .725 |

Appendix F (Continued)

One-way Analysis of Variance of Survey Items Regarding Tenure (Experience) as a School Superintendent

| Variable | Hypoth. SS | Error SS | Hypoth. MS | Error MS | F | Sig. of F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .45002 | 283.07052 | .22501 | .97948 | .22973 | .795 |
| 2 | 1.51796 | 325.20464 | .75898 | 1.12528 | .67448 | .510 |
| 3 | 2.08588 | 330.17097 | 1.04294 | 1.14246 | .91289 | .403 |
| 4 | 1.74860 | 211.63154 | .87430 | .73229 | 1.19393 | .305 |
| 5 | .43690 | 308.72749 | .21845 | 1.06826 | .20449 | .815 |
| 6 | 1.74277 | 244.58600 | .87138 | .84632 | 1.02962 | .358 |
| 7 | 3.46906 | 238.64053 | 1.73453 | .82575 | 2.10056 | .124 |
| 8 | 5.94537 | 239.79094 | 2.97268 | .82973 | 3.58273 | .029* |
| 9 | 13.61620 | 249.46256 | 6.80810 | .86319 | 7.88712 | .000* |
| 10 | .92332 | 201.02189 | .46166 | .69558 | .66371 | .516 |
| 11 | 2.97270 | 315.71223 | 1.48635 | 1.09243 | 1.36059 | .258 |
| 12 | 5.39826 | 332.93051 | 2.69913 | 1.15201 | 2.34298 | .098 |
| 13 | 1.90792 | 286.34893 | .95396 | .99083 | .96279 | .383 |
| 14 | 2.82763 | 265.67922 | 1.41382 | .91931 | 1.53792 | .217 |
| 15 | 2.17174 | 280.88305 | 1.08587 | .97191 | 1.11725 | .329 |
| 16 | 1.34093 | 110.66934 | .67046 | .38294 | 1.75084 | .175 |
| 17 | 1.18836 | 229.12329 | .59418 | .79281 | .74946 | .474 |
| 18 | 2.53871 | 273.42019 | 1.26936 | .94609 | 1.34169 | .263 |
| 19 | 2.39730 | 103.61297 | 1.19865 | .35852 | 3.34331 | .037* |
| 20 | 5.77640 | 279.88113 | 2.88820 | .96845 | 2.98230 | .052 |
| 21 | 2.57589 | 217.13301 | 1.28795 | .75133 | 1.71423 | .182 |
| 22 | .34059 | 161.36831 | .17030 | .55837 | .30499 | .737 |
| 23 | 2.25037 | 140.99278 | 1.12519 | .48786 | 2.30635 | .101 |
| 24 | 1.83770 | 367.02189 | .91885 | 1.26997 | .72352 | .486 |
| 25 | 1.84124 | 209.21356 | .92062 | .72392 | 1.27171 | .282 |
| 26 | 1.09196 | 199.74024 | .54598 | .69114 | .78996 | .455 |
| 27 | 3.43384 | 319.97369 | 1.71692 | 1.10718 | 1.55072 | .214 |
| 28 | 1.01685 | 135.21260 | .50843 | .46786 | 1.08670 | .339 |
| 29 | .51072 | 179.74613 | .25536 | .62196 | .41057 | .664 |
| 30 | 3.81254 | 296.16006 | 1.90627 | 1.02478 | 1.86019 | .158 |

(*) Significant at the .05 level

Appendix F (Continued)

One-way Analysis of Variance of Survey Items Regarding the Number of College Reading Courses Taken by Indiana Superintendents

| Variable | Hypoth. SS | Error SS | Hypoth. MS | Error MS | F | Sig. of F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 11.51376 | 272.00679 | 5.75688 | .94120 | 6.11653 | .003* |
| 2 | 14.23920 | 312.48340 | 7.11960 | 1.08126 | 6.58455 | .002* |
| 3 | 11.19703 | 321.05982 | 5.59852 | 1.11093 | 5.03947 | .007* |
| 4 | 6.74285 | 206.63729 | 3.37142 | .71501 | 4.71523 | .010* |
| 5 | 6.39102 | 302.77336 | 3.19551 | 1.04766 | 3.05015 | .049* |
| 6 | 2.66902 | 243.65974 | 1.33451 | .84311 | 1.58284 | .207 |
| 7 | 10.24395 | 231.86564 | 5.12197 | .80230 | 6.38409 | .002* |
| 8 | 6.00910 | 239.72720 | 3.00455 | .82951 | 3.62210 | .028* |
| 9 | 9.18995 | 253.88882 | 4.59498 | .87851 | 5.23043 | .006* |
| 10 | 7.25893 | 194.68627 | 3.62947 | .67365 | 5.38772 | .005* |
| 11 | 12.33210 | 306.35283 | 6.16605 | 1.06004 | 5.81678 | .003* |
| 12 | 15.91710 | 322.41167 | 7.95855 | 1.11561 | 7.13380 | .001* |
| 13 | 9.46147 | 278.79538 | 4.73074 | .96469 | 4.90389 | .008* |
| 14 | 3.14837 | 265.35848 | 1.57419 | .91820 | 1.71444 | .182 |
| 15 | 4.30248 | 278.75232 | 2.15124 | .96454 | 2.23032 | .109 |
| 16 | .07818 | 111.93209 | .03909 | .38731 | .10093 | .904 |
| 17 | 4.38571 | 225.92593 | 2.19286 | .78175 | 2.80506 | .062 |
| 18 | 4.58951 | 271.36940 | 2.29475 | .93899 | 2.44384 | .089 |
| 19 | .46865 | 105.54162 | .23432 | .36520 | .64164 | .527 |
| 20 | 5.33649 | 280.32105 | 2.66824 | .96997 | 2.75085 | .066 |
| 21 | 3.82350 | 215.88541 | 1.91175 | .74701 | 2.55921 | .079 |
| 22 | 3.28593 | 158.42298 | 1.64296 | .54818 | 2.99714 | .051* |
| 23 | 2.15623 | 141.08692 | 1.07811 | .48819 | 2.20839 | .112 |
| 24 | .40162 | 368.45797 | .20081 | 1.27494 | .15751 | .854 |
| 25 | 1.04088 | 210.01391 | .52044 | .72669 | .71618 | .489 |
| 26 | 2.99594 | 197.83626 | 1.49797 | .68455 | 2.18824 | .114 |
| 27 | 12.26626 | 311.14128 | 6.13313 | 1.07661 | 5.69669 | .004* |
| 28 | 1.94076 | 134.28869 | .97038 | .46467 | 2.08833 | .126 |
| 29 | 2.96009 | 177.29676 | 1.48004 | .61348 | 2.41252 | .091 |
| 30 | 4.75028 | 295.22232 | 2.37514 | 1.02153 | 2.32508 | .100 |

(*) Significant at the .05 level